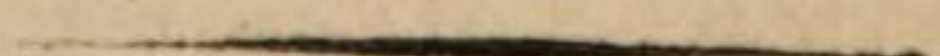


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L U C R E T I U S.



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L U C R E T I U S.



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Attributed

to Dr. Nott

Richard J. Winchell

2013-8-11

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF
TITUS LUCRETIVS CARUS,
ON
THE NATURE OF THINGS,

IN ENGLISH VERSE, WITH THE LATIN TEXT.

ΩΝΑΝΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙΣΙ.

PINDAR.

LONDON:

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1799.

THE

FIRST BOOK

OF

THE LUCRETIANUS CARUS

OR

THE LUCRETIANUS CARUS

BY HENRY ALAN WATSON

LONDON

PRINTED BY

W. B. ELLIS

1874

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P R E F A C E.

THE present publication is offered as a specimen of a new and entire translation of the Six Books of *Titus Lucretius Carus* on the doctrines of the Epicurean philosophy, or what he denominates the *Nature of Things*. Should it meet with that favourable reception the author wishes, so as to encourage him to produce, in separate successive publications, translations of the remaining Books, which are now in great forwardness, they will soon be committed to the press. An emblematical Frontispiece, executed by the very first artist of the present day, together with the Life of Lucretius, and a critical Essay on his work, will be prefixed. The Notes, which must of necessity be numerous, treating so abstruse a subject, will be selected from the best commentators, as D. Lambinus ; O. Gifanius ; T. Fabrus ;

J. B. Pius ; A. Preigerus ; J. Vossius ; M. Fayus, the Delphin editor ; T. Creech, the first English annotator ; and S. Havercamp, whose edition of Lucretius I consider as superior to any other extant, not even excepting the voluminous and splendid labour of Dr. Wakefield, and whose text I have principally adopted : They are meant to follow in a body at the end of the book, which would seem more pleasant to the reader's eye, than perpetually interfering with the poetic text. A copious Index will likewise be subjoined.

Having stated my design in the present work, it is but proper to say something of the nature of the undertaking. The difficulty of translating Lucretius will be best conceived by his acknowledged character as a writer. From what Quintilian says of him we may infer, that his style was considered as pointed, comprehensive, and vivacious. In argumentation he is certainly dictatorial, absolute, and persevering. He is, as Dryden remarks, always beforehand with his antagonists ; preventing their objections, and answering them. Sometimes, so bent is he upon his subject, so

much an atheist, that he forgets to be a poet. The rough philosophic boldness of his design is every now and then broke in upon by little episodes, and sharp playful poetic lights, which are beautiful and brilliant. His first English translator happily compares his composition to a landscape of majestic rugged scenery, where we frequently catch the dip of some luxuriant valley. His subject is by nature stubborn, and unyielding to poetry, in its original: How much more so then must it be, transfused into a language, which has few technical phrases adapted to philosophy, or abstruse science; and those few of course inharmounious? But all translations indeed have been justly compared to flowers transplanted into a foreign soil; which then most frequently lose their fragrancy, and their colours. The learned Casaubon asserted, that it was impossible to translate Lucretius: he was however translated into French prose by Marolles, in 1650; and appeared in French verse by another hand, in 1677. He was again rendered into French prose by the Baron Des Coutûres, in 1685; which edition has been reprinted with notes. I will not say with what

success these translations were attempted. The Italian version by Marchetti has undoubted merit. His earliest translator in our language was Mr. John Evelyn, who published the first book in English verse, accompanied with the Latin text, in 1656. The endeavour we will not criticise; although his kinsman, Richard Fanshawe, in a complimentary letter he writes him upon its publication, would consider it a task of such difficulty, as might well be entitled "The taming of the Shrew." The next, and the last English version, which indeed is the best I am acquainted with made in any language, was given by Mr. Creech, in 1682: He translated Lucretius throughout, and had certainly a most correct knowledge of his original. This work is so well known, and so generally esteemed, that I need not comment upon it: Even Dryden, who has since versified some portions of Lucretius, yields the palm to him; and confesses, that Creech's manner is preferable to his own, where an entire translation of the author is intended. I shall then only observe, that those who attempt to translate Lucretius can alone be aware of Creech's merit. And what, I trust, may

serve to justify a new translation, is the antiquated and harsh versification of his day, ungrateful to a modern ear, and disinclining from the abstruse matter Lucretius treats, which, to become alluring, must be dressed in inviting colours.

To the scrupulous and severe something of apology has been usually addressed, in holding up Lucretius to public notice. The Motto I have prefixed to this work may perhaps serve as an answer to every moral objection that can be raised against it. It is not for the unwise, it is for the *intelligent* that the lays of Lucretius *resound*; for those whose judgments will investigate his doctrines, and employ them as may be though fitting. But it is not the business of his translator either to vindicate, or refute his tenets: he translates him as a Classic. Were we to reject every ancient writer, whose page is somewhere stained with what is immoral or licentious; we should consign to oblivion some of the finest historians, philosophers, and poets of antiquity. Whatever Lucretius may have advanced repugnant to the belief of a Deity is so notoriously

wrong, so readily contradicted, that no bad effect can be apprehended from it. Perhaps the most effectual means of decrying atheism is to shew it in its undisguised, Epicurean light; as the Spartans displayed the hateful crime of ebriety by the public exhibition of drunkards. Nothing can seduce a truly virtuous mind, says Aristippus; but a corrupt mind may suck poison from the sweetest flowers. Yet, whatever were the opinions of this great philosopher respecting divinity; does he not declaim most nobly against vices in general? Does he not enforce the subjection of every unlawful passion, and strenuously recommend that tranquillity of mind, which it was the business of the Epicurean philosophy to inculcate, and which its opponents, as Diogenes remarks, have maliciously interpreted into sensual gratification; an error that has become proverbial, and been transmitted even to the present times? Seneca however, the most eloquent of the Stoics, allowed this sect their due merit. I cannot better conclude my apology for our Author, than by quoting his learned expositor Dionysius Lambinus, who tells us, that although Lucretius, as an Epicurean,

might dissent from the divine Plato respecting the nature of the soul; yet should we not disregard his other opinions, in which the ancient philosophers, and even those who profess Christianity, invariably agree with him.

But of the sect of Epicurus, and of other philosophers placed in a comparative view, I have much more to say, if encouragement be given me to extend hereafter my Lucretian labours.

PREFACE

might differ from the other. But regarding the
nature of the facts, yet should we not disregard the
other opinions, in which the ancient philologists and
even those who write critically, invariably agree
with him.

But of the text of Epiphanius, and of other philo-
sophers placed in a comparative view, I have much more
to say, if encouragement be given me to extend here-
after my Lactantius labours.

ARGUMENT
OF THE FIRST BOOK.
The Poet begins with an invocation to Venus, the goddess of love, and then proceeds to a general discourse on the nature of things, the origin of the world, and the fate of the human soul.

TITUS LUCRETII CARUS

ON

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.—The Poet begins with a general discourse on the nature of things, the origin of the world, and the fate of the human soul. He then proceeds to a more particular description of the human mind, and the various passions and affections which it is capable of. The Poet concludes with a description of the human body, and the various parts and organs which it consists of.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FIRST BOOK.

HE begins with an Invocation to Venus, the great procreative Power.—He dedicates his Work on the NATURE OF THINGS to Memmius.—He explains the Disposition of the Gods; then praises Epicurus, whose Doctrines he follows, and exculpates him from the general charge of Impiety.—The horrid effects of Superstition instanced by the cruel sacrifice of Iphigenia.—He celebrates the Poet Ennius, mentioning the Separation of the Soul from the Body, and the Nature of Spirits.—He briefly proposes his Subject, and then enters upon it, telling us, that NOTHING CAN BE FORMED OF NOTHING, and that NOTHING CAN BE REDUCED TO NOTHING.—There are certain minute Bodies not to be discerned by our Senses, but which the Mind may nevertheless conceive; and of these all Things are composed, even such as are invisible, Wind, for instance, &c.—To these Particles he subjoins a Void, or empty Space.—He proves that nothing can exist but Body and Void; that there is nothing of a third Nature; that all other Things we experience, as Weight, Heat, Poverty, War, &c. are only Conjunctions or Results, Properties or Accidents of Body and Void.

Void.—He advances that primary Particles are perfectly solid, and indivisible; that they are Least, and are eternal. Of these, by the intervention of a Void, Things both hard and soft are alike composed.—He contradicts Heraclitus, who pretends that Fire is the first Principle of all Things; and likewise other Philosophers, who assert that the first Principle is Air, or Water, or Earth.—He denies, contrary to the Tenets of Empedocles, that Things are compounded of the four Elements.—He confutes the Homœomery of Anaxagoras, or his Doctrine of similar component Parts.—He contends that the Universe is all ways infinite, that primary Particles are infinite in number, and that the Void admits of no boundaries.—He ridicules those who imagine the Universe to have a Centre, to which every thing ponderous has a downward tendency, while every thing light rises spontaneously upward; and likewise the idea of the Antipodes. Whatever is boundless, and has no Extreme, can have no Centre.—The supposition of a celestial Fence encompassing and compressing the World, to prevent its dissolution, is finely touched upon, and concludes this Book.

TITI LUCRETII CARI

DE

RERUM NATURA

LIBER PRIMUS.

ÆNEADUM Genetrix, hominum divômque voluptas,
Alma Venus, cœli subter labentia signa
Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferenteis
Concelebras ; per Te quoniam genus omne animantum
Concipitur, visitque exortum lumina solis : 5
Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli,
Adventumque tuum ; tibi suaveis dædala tellus
Submittit flores, tibi rident æquora ponti,
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cœlum.
Nam simul ac species patefacta est verna diei, 10
Et referata viget genitalis aura Favonî ;

TITUS LUCRETIVS CARUS

ON THE

NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

BLEST Venus, Parent of the Roman line,
 Delight of beings mortal and divine!
 Who govern'st all beneath heav'n's starry field,
 All the plough'd sea, and earth's rich bosom yield;
 Creatures by Thee of ev'ry species live, 5
 And at their birth the solar light receive;
 At thy approach, great Goddess, swiftly fly
 The ruthless winds, the storms which vex our sky;
 The dædal lands to thee their flow'rs display,
 And smiling ocean smooths its billowy way; 10
 Th' etherial vault shines more serenely bright,
 And spreads a broader flood of purer light:
 For, when the days in vernal charms prevail,
 And Zephyr looses his prolific gale,

Aëriæ primùm volucres te, Diva, tuumque
Significant initum percussæ corda tua vi :
Inde feræ pecudes persultant pabula læta,
Et rapidos tranant amneis ; ita capta lepore, 15
Illecebrisque tuis omnis natura animantum
Te sequitur cupidè, quò quamque inducere pergis :
Denique per maria, ac monteis, fluviosque rapaceis,
Frundiferasque domos avium, camposque virenteis,
Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem, 20
Efficis, ut cupidè generatim sæcla propagent.

Quæ quoniam rerum Naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine Te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit lætum, neque amabile quicquam ;
Te sociam studeo scribundis versibus esse, 25
Quos ego de RERUM NATURA pangere conor
Memmiadæ nostro : quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.

Then airy songsters thy approach proclaim, 15
Feel thy strong impulse in their vitals reign ;
Then wanton beasts frisk o'er their fatt'ning grounds,
And sportive pass the furious river's bounds :
Thy wondrous pow'r each animal beguiles,
Smit with thy charms, thy fascinating wiles, 20
They rush impetuous to thy joyous way,
And fondly follow wherefoe'er you stray :
All beings in the vasty seas that glide,
In rapid streams, or haunt the mountain's side,
The leafy dwellings of the feather'd train, 25
Or spread the verdant surface of the plain,
Feel in their breasts the workings of mild love ;
Kinds get their kindred kind, and thy strong influence
prove.

Since, then, the Nature of all things you sway ;
Since without Thee the glorious tracts of day 30
There's nought can visit, or to human sight
Nought can seem lovely, or afford delight :
Thee I invoke, companion of my verse,
Which strives OF THINGS THE NATURE to rehearse ;
That verse I sing for him Thou lov'st so well, 35
For Memmius ! born all morta's to excel ;

Quo magis æternum da dictis, Diva, leporem :
Effice ut interea fera mœnera militiai 30
Per maria ac terras omneis sopita quiescant.
Nam Tu sola potes tranquilla pace juvare
Mortaleis, quoniam belli fera mœnera Mavors
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Rejicit, æterno devinctus vulnere amoris ; 35
Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice repostâ
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, visus :
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.
Hunc tu, Diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelas 40
Funde, petens placidam Romanis, Incluta, pacem.
Nam neque Nos agere hoc patriâi tempore iniquo
Possumus æquo animo : neque Memmî clara propago
Talibus in rebus communi deesse saluti.

Who shines, kind Goddess, gifted with thy grace,
The first of ev'ry age, of ev'ry race :
For him then deign, o Queen ! my lays to fill
With all thy gracious eloquence ; and still 40
The horrid din of war's tumultuous train,
Thro'out the wide-stretch'd earth, the trackless main.
'Tis Thine alone with peace to bless mankind,
While mighty Mars to battle is confin'd ;
Yet with love's pangs the warrior god oppress 45
Will sometimes sink upon thy balmy breast,
Viewing thy fine-turn'd neck will there recline,
And with his eyes drink deep thy charms divine ;
Then as with upturn'd lips he clings to Thee,
And sucks thy breath in am'rous ecstasy ; 50
As curling round him, when completely blest
Thy form celestial by the pow'r is prest,
In all thy speech let such persuasion reign,
That Rome the gift of peace may soon obtain.
For how, when these rude times distract our state, 55
How can I calm my purpos'd lore relate ?
How can th' illustrious offspring of my Friend
Neglect the public safety to attend ?

Quod superest, vacuas aureis mihi Memmiada, et te 45
Semotum à curis adhibe veram ad rationem,
Ne mea dona tibi studio disposita fideli,
Intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquo:
Nam tibi de summa Cœli ratione, Deûmque,
Differere incipiam, et rerum primordia pandam; 50
Unde omneis Natura creët res, auctet, alatque:
Quove eadem rursus Natura perempta resolvat:
Quæ nos Materiem, et Genitalia Corpora rebus
Reddunda in ratione vocare, et Semina rerum
Adpellare fuëmus, et hæc eadem usurpare 55
Corpora Prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.

Omnis enim per se Divôm natura necesse est
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe;
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis, 60
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

When Truth's pure doctrines, Memmius, thou shalt hear,
Free be thy mind, attentive be thine ear; 60
Nor let the lessons, which I've faithful wrought,
Be spurn'd, ere well they have engag'd thy thought!
The inmost nature of the distant Skies
I'll first illustrate, with its Deities;
Next I'll unfold the origin of things, 65
How Nature these into existence brings;
How then She'll propagate, how then maintain;
And how the atoms lost restore again:
These atoms Matter we are wont to name,
Bodies creative of another frame, 70
Or Bodies primary, or Seeds of things,
Since from these principles all being springs.

For 'tis the nature of the Gods to be
In peace profound, with immortality,
Remote and sever'd from whate'er belongs 75
To the base business of terrestrial throngs,
Exempt from danger, and exempt from pain,
Sufficient in the goods themselves contain,
Needing in no wise aids that we can lend;
Good actions glad them not, nor bad offend. 80

Humana ante oculos fœdè quom vita jaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub Relligione,
Quæ caput a cœli regionibus ostendebat, 65
Horribili super adspectu mortalibus instans ;
Primum GRAIUS homo mortaleis tollere contra
Est oculos ausus, primusque obfistere contra :
Quem nec fama Deûm, nec fulmina, nec minitanti
Murmure compressit Cœlum, sed eo magis acrem 70
Virtutem inritât animi, confringere ut arcta
Naturæ primus portarum claustra cupiret.
Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
Processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi ;
Atque Omne immensum peragravit mente animoque : 75
Unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat ; finita potestas denique quoique
Quanam sit ratione, atque alte terminus hærens.
Quare Relligio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur, nos exæquat victoria Cœlo. 80

When human life oppress'd, and abject lay
Before all eyes, from Superstition's sway,
Whose horrid head midst regions of the sky
Look'd grimly forth, portending misery ;
Then first a GREEK * dar'd lift his mortal sight 85
In bold defiance, dar'd with giant might
Resistance make : him not the boasted Gods,
Their thunder, nor their echoing dread Abodes
Could daunt ; they only serv'd to bind
More firm the stubborn virtue of his mind ; 90
Urg'd him, inspir'd with ardent zeal, the first
Of Nature's portals the firm bolts to burst.
His spirit's strength prevail'd, and sallied forth
Beyond the blazing boundaries of earth ;
Fraught with intelligence, his wondrous soul 95
View'd, and consider'd the capacious Whole :
His end obtain'd, triumphantly he told
What beings could, and what could not unfold ;
How far the bounded pow'rs of things could reach,
What were their limits, what their utmost stretch : 100
Thus Superstition was in turn subdu'd,
And men and Gods on the same level stood.

* Epicurus.

Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
Impia te rationis inire elementa, viamque
Endogredi sceleris ; Quod contra, sæpius illa
Relligio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta,
Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram 85
Iphianassai turpârunt sanguine fœde
Ductores Danaûm, delecti, prima virorum.
Quoi simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus
Ex utraque pari malarum parte profusa est.
Et mœstum simul ante aras adstare parentem 90
Sensit, et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros ;
Adspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civeis :
Muta metu terram genibus submissa petebat :
Nec miseræ prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
Quod Patrio princeps donârat nomine Regem. 95
Nam sublata virûm manibus tremebundaque ad aras
Deducta est, non ut, solemni more sacrorum

While thus instructive, much, my friend, I dread,
Lest by my doctrines thou should'st be misled ;
And think I mean the paths of guilt to try, 105
Or impious depths of foul philosophy :
But know, Religion has in ancient times
Provok'd to deeds profane, and frequent crimes :
Hence 'twas in Aulis that the chosen train
Of Grecian chiefs, the first in rank of men, 110
At Dian's virgin shrine, dire scene of woe !
Bade Iphigenia's blood polluted flow :
Soon as the victim veil which wrapt her head,
Her maiden tresses, and her cheeks o'erspread ;
Soon as her sire she at the altar saw 115
Distracted, and the priest beside him draw
The sheathed blade ; saw too, as she drew near,
Her much-lov'd citizens shed many a tear ;
Low on her knees to earth she sunk, o'ercome
With silent horror at th' impending doom : 120
Ah ! then 'twas vain that the ill-fated maid
Should to a King as to a Father plead :
By ruthless hands she from her friends was torn ;
All trembling, shuddering to the altar borne ;

Perfecto, posset claro comitari Hymenæo :

Sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso

Hostia concideret mactatu mæsta parentis, 100

Exitus ut classi felix, faustusque daretur.

Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum.

Tutemet à nobis jam quovis tempore Vatum

Terriloquis victus dictis desciscere quæres ?

Quippe etenim quam multa tibi jam fingere possum 105

Somnia, quæ vitæ rationes vertere possint,

Fortunasque tuas omneis turbare timore ?

Et merito : nam si certam finem esse viderent

Ærumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent

Relligionibus, atque minis obsistere Vatum : 110

Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,

Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum.

Ignoratur enim quæ sit natura animæ,

Nata sit, an, contra, nascentibus insinuetur,

Not as to meet glad Hymen's gay delights, 125
And see perform'd the solemn previous rites ;
But the chaste fair, e'en then when she should wed,
In beauty's prime, a wretch devoted bled
Beneath a parent's stroke ; that prosp'rous gales
Safe from their port might waft the Grecian sails : 130
Thus could Religion, awing human will,
Persuade mankind to such excess of ill.

But thou, long bias'd by those tales of old
Which fabling Bards have to the vulgar told,
Wilt from my song dissent : yet know, that I 135
Could frame such visions of vain mystery,
As would the tenor of thy life perplex,
And all its goods with apprehension vex ;
Most justly too : for, if mankind were sure
Their woes could only with their lives endure, 140
At all events Religion they'd disdain,
And deem the Poets' threat'ning legends vain :
Now to resist no room, no grounds appear,
Since pains eternal after death we fear.
For what the nature of the soul may be 145
Is quite unknown ; whether, as some agree,

Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta, 115

An tenebras Orci visat, vastasque lacunas,

An pecudes alias divinitus infinet se,

ENNIUS ut noster cecinit, qui primus amœno

Detulit ex Helicone perenni frunde coronam,

Per genteis Italas hominum quæ clara clueret. 120

Etsi præterea tamen esse Acherusia templa

Ennius æternis exponit versibus, edens :

Quo neque permanent animæ, neque corpora nostra ;

Sed quædam simulacra modis pallentia miris :

Unde sibi exortam semper-florentis Homeri 125

Commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere falsas

Cœpisse, et rerum naturam expandere dictis.

Quapropter bene, cum, Superis de rebus habenda

Nobis est ratio, Solis Lunæque meatus

Qua fiant ratione ; et qua vi quæque genantur 130

'Tis inly born ; or, when we first draw breath
'Tis then instill'd, and dies with us in death ;
If Stygian glooms it visits, or may go
To lakes that from infernal waters flow ; 150
Or enter, as a hallow'd thing, the frame
Of brutes ; such once of ENNIUS was the theme ;
Ennius, who first from Helicon's sweet shade
A garland pluckt of green that ne'er shall fade,
A garland that shall flourish fresh and gay 155
Where'er Italia's sons extend their sway !
Tho' Ennius elsewhere in immortal verse
Did spacious Acheron's abodes rehearse ;
Yet, nor our bodies, nor our souls dwell there,
But certain shades in strange pale guise appear ; 160
Midst these, he tells us, to his wond'ring eyes
He saw the form of deathless Homer rise,
Who, while his tears in briny torrents fell,
Began of things the nature to reveal.

As therefore wishing to investigate 165
Whate'er to things Supernal may relate,
And in the fields of vast inquiry stray
Far as the Solar track, or Lunar way ;

In terris : tum, cum primis, ratione sagaci
Unde Anima atque Animi constet natura, videndum ;
Et quæ res nobis vigilantibus obvia menteis
Terrificet, morbo adfectis, somnoque sepultis,
Cernere uti videamur eos, audireque coram, 135
Morte obita quorum tellus amplectitur ossa.

Nec me animi fallit GRAIORUM obscura reperta
Difficile inlustrare LATINIS versibus esse,
Multa novis verbis præsertim quom sit agendum,
Propter egestatem linguæ, et rerum novitatem ; 140
Sed tua me Virtus tamen, et sperata voluptas
Suavis Amicitiae, quemvis efferre laborem
Suadet, et inducit nocteis vigilare serenas,
Quærentem dictis quibus, et quo carmine demum
Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti, 145
Res quibus ocultas penitus convifere possis.

Hunc igitur terrorem animi, tenebrasque necesse est

Likewise to know, how all things upon earth
Receive from unseen pow'r their various birth : 170
So should we strive sagacious to discern
What the Soul may be, what its nature learn ;
What 'tis of evident that frights the mind
Diseas'd, awake, or when by sleep confin'd ;
Till ev'n those, whose dead bones buried lie, 175
We hear, and see as present to our eye.

Full well I know, that scarce can Latian verse
The deep discoveries of the GREEKS rehearse ;
Since that our subject 's new, our LANGUAGE poor,
Some phrases must be found ne'er used before, 180
To tell thee all : but such thy virtuous Worth,
Such hoped-for joys sweet Friendship can draw forth ;
That ev'ry labour would to me seem light,
And chearfully I'd wear each tranquil night,
To frame a diction, and a mode of song, 185
Which o'er thy sense shall spread a light so strong ;
That by its aid thou clearly may'st explore
What 's most recondite in great Nature's store.

Wherefore, to chase these terrors of the mind,
And the dark clouds which understanding blind, 190

Non radii Solis, neque lucida tela Diei
Discutiant, sed Naturæ species, Ratioque :
Principium hinc cujus nobis exordia sumet : 150

NULLAM REM E NIHILO GIGNI DIVINITUS UNQUAM.

Quippe ita formido Mortaleis continet omneis,
Quod multa in Terris fieri, Cœloque tuentur,
Quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
Possunt, ac fieri divino Numine rentur. 155

Quas ob res, ubi viderimus, nil posse creari
De nihilo, tum, quod sequimur, jam rectius inde
Perspiciemus, ut unde queat res quæque creari,
Et quo quæque modo fiant opera sine Divôm.

Nam si de Nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus 160
Omne genus nasci posset ; nil Semine egeret :
E mare primum homines, è terra posset oriri
Squammigerum genus, et volucres ; erumpere cœlo
Armenta, atque aliæ pecudes : genus omne ferarum
Incerto partu culta, ac deserta teneret : 165

We neither need the arrowy beams of Day,
Nor yet th' assistance of the Solar ray ;
But a true knowledge of great Nature's laws,
An insight into each existing Cause.

This maxim then we hence for granted take, 195

THAT HEAV'N OF NOTHING COULD A NOTHING MAKE :

For Mortal men are so enchain'd by fear ;

That much beheld both in the Skies and Here,

To which no obvious reason they assign,

Is deem'd th' immediate work of Pow'rs divine. 200

Since nothing can from nothing, we perceive,

Be form'd ; it proves the truth which we believe :

That from such principles all things are made,

And all perform'd without Celestial aid.

For, were they made from Nothing, there would spring

Beings of ev'ry kind from ev'ry thing ; 206

No Seed could then be wanting ; and the sea

Man's breed might first produce ; from earth's wide way

Fishes and birds of ev'ry sort would rise,

Or herds or various cattle from the skies ; 210

While motley offsprings of the savage train

Should haunt each desert wild, each cultur'd plain.

Nec fructus iidem arboribus constare folerent,

Sed mutarentur : ferre omnes omnia possent.

Quippe, ubi non essent genitalia Corpora quoique,

Quî posset mater rebus consistere certa ?

At nunc Seminibus quia certis quidque creatur, 170

Inde enascitur, atque oras in luminis exit,

Materies ubi inest cujusque et Corpora prima :

Atque hac re nequeunt ex omnibus omnia gigni,

Quod certis in rebus inest secreta facultas.

Præterea, cur Vere rosam, frumenta Calore, 175

Viteis Autumno fundi sudante videmus :

Si non, certa suo quia tempore Semina rerum

Cum confluxerunt, patefit quodcunque creatur,

Dum tempestates adsunt, et vivida tellus

Tuto res teneras effert in luminis oras ? 180

No fruit would then be constant to its tree ;
One ceaseless round of mutability
Must mark all vegetation, and each bough 215
A varying product would for ever shew.

Did not creative Seeds belong to all,
A certain parent stock what could we call ?
But as from Seeds distinct all things on earth
Owe their existence, thence are waked to birth ; 220
And each there bursts into the blaze of day
Where its first Principles and Matter lay ;
So all of beings cannot all beget,
But separate pow'rs to separate things relate.

Why in the Vernal season blooms the rose, 225
Why rip'ning corn in burning Summer grows,
Or why do grapes with deepen'd purple shine
When Autumn pours its juices thro' the vine ;
Unless because the proper Seed of things,
At its due period, into action springs ; 230
While a new being rises on the eye,
When nature yields fit opportunity,
And earth shoots forth with fertilizing might
Its tender offsprings in the fields of light ?

Quod si de Nihilo fierent, subito exorerentur
Incerto spatio, atque alienis partibus anni :
Quippe ubi nulla forent primordia, quæ genitali
Concilio possent arceri tempore iniquo.

Nec porro augendis rebus Spatio foret usus 185
Seminis ad coitum, è Nihilo si crescere possent.
Nam fierent juvenes subito ex infantibus parvis :
E terraque exorta repente arbuſta ſalirent.
Quorum nil fieri manifestum eſt, omnia quando
Paullatim crescunt (ut par eſt) Semine certo : 190
Crescendoque genus ſervant ; ut noſcere poſſis
Quæque ſua de Materia grandescere, aliquæ.

Huc accedit uti ſine certis imbribus anni
Lætificos nequeat foetus ſubmittere tellus :
Nec porro ſecreta cibo natura animantum 195
Propagare genus poſſit, vitamque tueri :
Ut potius multis communia Corpora rebus

But were they form'd from Nothing, they'd appear 235
Sudden, uncertain, and thro' all the year ;
For ne'er were seeds by adverse seasons stay'd,
Or in their genial offices delay'd.

Moreover, reas'ning on a thing's increase,
How little need we either time or Space 240
For seed to generate, did we but know
That certainly from Nothing it would grow ;
A child might instant then a boy become,
And sudden groves shoot forth from earth's deep womb :
Yet, that it is not thus we plainly see ; 245
All things admit of growth in slow degree
(As fitting 'tis) by their peculiar Seed,
Preserving, as they grow, their native breed :
Hence may'st thou learn, that they acquire their size
From their own Matter which within them lies. 250

Again, did timely show'rs not glad the year,
No joyful fruits would on the soil appear ;
Nor could each animal depriv'd of food,
Be with productive pow'rs or life endu'd :
Then rather think, to many things pertain 255
So many common Bodies, as 'tis seen

Multa putes esse, ut verbis Elementa videmus,
Quam sine Principiis ullam rem existere posse.

Denique cur Homines tantos natura parare 200
Non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent
Transire, et magnos manibus divellere monteis,
Multaque vivendo vitalia vincere sæcla :
Si non Materies quia rebus reddita certa est
Gignundis, è qua constat quid possit oriri ? 205
NIL igitur fieri de NILO posse fatendum est :
Semine quando opus est rebus, quo quæque creatæ
Aëris in teneras possint proferrier auras.

Postremo, quoniam Incultis præstare videmus
Culta loca, et manibus melioreis reddere foetus : 210
Esse videlicet in terris Primordia rerum,
Quæ nos, foecundas vertentes vomere glebas,
Terraïque solum subigentes, cimus ad ortus,
Quod si nulla forent, nostro sine quæque labore
Sponte sua multo fieri meliora videres. 215

Huc accedit, uti quidque in sua Corpora rursus
Dissolvat Natura, neque ad Nihilum interimat res.

Words are compos'd of Letters, than conceive
That ought devoid of Principles can live.

Say too, why nature did not Men provide
With feet to walk upon the billowy tide ; 260
With hands that might uproot the mountain's base,
Or life beyond its usual term increase ?
'Tis that a certain Matter is assign'd
To procreation, and the rise of kind :
Then to this maxim let us be agreed ; 265
NOTHING of NOTHING can be form'd ; for Seed
To all is wanting, whence whatever's made
Is thro' the trackless space of air convey'd.

In fine, as Cultur'd to Uncultur'd soils
We see preferr'd, compensating men's toils 270
With choicer produce ; therefore in the ground,
'Tis plain, some latent Rudiments are found ;
These, as the plough upturns the fruitful earth,
Conq'ring the stubborn glebe, we raise to birth :
Did these exist not, labour would be vain ; 275
Things of themselves perfection might attain.

And learn, that Nature totally destroys
Nought she has made, but variously employs

Nam, si quid mortale è cunctis partibus esset,
Ex oculis res quæque repente erepta periret ;
Nulla vi foret usus enim, quæ partibus ejus 220
Discidium parere, et nexus exsolvere posset.
Quod nunc, æterno quia constant Semine quæque,
Donec vis obiit, quæ res diverberet ictu,
Aut intus penetret per inania, dissolvatque,
Nullius exitium patitur Natura videri. 225

Præterea, quæcunque vetustate amovet ætas,
Si penitus perimit consumens Materiem omnem,
Unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitæ
Redducit Venus ? aut reductum dædala tellus
Unde alit, atque auget, generatim pabula præbens ? 230
Unde mare ingenui fontes, externaque longè
Flumina suppeditant ? unde æther sidera pascit ?
Omnia enim debet, mortali Corpore quæ sunt,
Infinita ætas consumpse, anteacta diesque.

Means to dissolve all in her boundless reign
Into its native Elements again. 280

Were bodies subject to destruction quite,
They soon would perish as withdrawn from sight;
No strength would then be needful to disjoin
Each textile part, or break what may combine:
But, as an everlasting Seed prevails, 285
No work of deathless Nature ever fails,
Till force obtains; when suddenly 'tis broke,
Each fine interstice burst, or shiver'd by some stroke.

Did all things worn with age dissolve away,
And did the Matter whence they're form'd decay; 290
Say how could Venus, procreative pow'r!
Species by species animals restore?
Or, when restor'd, how could the teeming field
Nourish, increase, and food to each kind yield?
Say how could native founts supply the seas, 295
Or rivers rolling thro' long distant ways?
Say how yon regions of bespangled air
Could furnish nurture to each beamy star?
For countless periods past, and time untold,
Must have destroy'd whate'er 's of Mortal mould: 300

Quod si in eo spatium, atque anteaeta ætate fuere, 235

E quibus hæc Rerum consistit Summa resecta :

Immortali sunt natura prædita certe.

Haud igitur possunt ad Nilum quæque reverti.

Denique res omneis eadem vis causaque volgò

Conficeret, nisi Materies æterna teneret 240

Inter se nexus, minus aut magis endopedita.

Tactus enim lethi fatis esset causa profecto :

Quippe, ubi nulla forent æterno Corpore, eorum

Contextum vis deberet dissolvere quæque.

At nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum 245

Diffimiles constant, æternaque materies est,

Incolumni remanent res corpore, dum fatis acris

Vis obeat pro textura cujusque reperta.

Haud igitur redit ad Nihilum res ulla, sed omnes

Discidio redeunt in corpora materiai. 250

Postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater Æther

In gremium matris Terrai præcipitavit.

But in such space immense, such vast of time,
If aught renew'd this Universe sublime,
'Twas something surely that's Immortal born ;
For to a Nothing things cannot return.

The self same power, and the self same cause, 305
All things would soon dissolve by constant laws ;
Unless that Matter which can never die
Strengthens, or more or less, each various tie :
The slightest touch the means of death might prove ;
For, if eternal Life were not inwove 310
In ev'ry being ; force, however small,
Might break the texture of th' original :
But, as the links of principle appear
All unconnected, and dissimilar ;
As matter moves in one eternal round, 315
And in their being things unchang'd are found,
Till pow'r occurs sufficient in its might
The various parts of things to disunite ;
So nothing sinks to Nought, but dies, and then
To native matter is resolv'd again.

Lastly observe, when vanish'd are those show'rs,
Which o'er the Earth's maternal bosom pours

At nitidæ surgunt fruges, ramique virescunt
Arboribus ; crescunt ipsæ, foetuque gravantur.
Hinc alitur porro nostrum genus, atque ferarum : 255
Hinc lætas urbeis pueris florere videmus,
Frundiferasque novis avibus canere undique fylvas.
Hinc fessæ pecudes pingues per pabula læta
Corpora deponunt, et candens lacteus humor
Uberibus manat distentis ; hinc nova proles 260
Artubus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas
Ludit, lacte mero menteis percussa novellas.
Haud igitur penitus pereunt quæcunque videntur :
Quando aliud ex alio reficit Natura, nec ullam
Rem gigni patitur, nisi morte adjutam aliena. 265
Nunc age, res quoniam docui non posse creari
De Nihilo, neque item genitas ad Nil revocari ;
Ne qua forte tamen cœptes diffidere dictis,
Quod nequeunt oculis rerum Primordia cerni ;

Æther, kind father ! then instead we see
Harvests of waving gold ; and from each tree
Rich loaded boughs of fertile green depend, 325
Which still increase, and thick with fruitage bend ;
These to our kind, and brutes like nurture yield ;
By these with youth are our gay cities fill'd ;
Hence leafy groves with new-born choirs resound ;
Hence fatt'ning herds stretch o'er the gladsome ground
Their wearied sides, and ever-plenteous rills 331
White from the udder's milky store distils ;
Hence, sporting wanton o'er the tender green
With little limbs, the rising breed are seen ;
And, from their dams as the rich draughts they drain, 335
Gladness and health flow fast thro' ev'ry vein.
That nothing's quite destructible, it seems ;
For Nature one thing of another frames ;
Nor does it suffer aught to have increase,
Till of some other thing the life shall cease. 340

Since I've explain'd, that things cannot be born
Of Nought ; so cannot unto Nought return :
Lest haply thou my doctrines disbelieve,
Because thy pow'rs of sight do not perceive

Accipe præterea, quæ Corpora Tute necesse est 270

Confiteare esse in rebus, nec posse videri.

Principio, VENTI vis verberat incita pontum,

Ingenteisque ruit naveis, et nubila differt ;

Interdum rapido percurrens turbine campos

Arboribus magnis sternit, monteisque supremos 275

Silvifragis vexat flabris : ita perfurit acri

Cum fremitu, sævitque minaci murmure coortus.

Sunt igitur VENTI nimirum corpora cæca,

Quæ mare, quæ terras, quæ denique nubila cœli

Verrunt, ac subito vexantia turbine raptant. 280

Nec ratione fluunt alia, stragemque propagant,

Ac cum mollis aquæ fertur natura repente

Flumine abundanti, quod largis imbribus auget

Montibus ex altis magnus decursus aquai,

Fragmina conjiciens sylvarum, arbuſtaque tota ; 285

Nec validi poſſunt pontes venientis aquai

Those atoms, Principles of things ; then learn, 345
Bodies exist which Thou mayst not discern.
First, the WINDS' force stirs up the vexed deep,
Shatters vast ships, and down th' aerial sleep
Rolls the disparting clouds ; sometimes amain
It scours, and strews the desolated plain 350
With fragments of huge trees ; or wildly tears
Each forest which the mountain's summit bears :
So fierce it roars, with such collected force
It threatens destruction in its howling course.
WINDS then are viewless bodies ; which, when driv'n 355
Against the sea, the earth, or clouds of heav'n,
Upturn them all, and in disquiet bear
With sudden whirls their masses high in air :
Rushing they deal dire devastation round ;
As when the yielding streamlet bursts its bound, 360
Swoll'n by a mighty torrent's furious tide,
Which, big with plenteous rains, pours down the side
Of some tremendous height, tearing away
Whole groves and shiver'd woods ; no bridge can stay,
Firm as 'tis built, the waves which move along 365
Near and more near, impetuously strong :

Vim subitam tolerare : ita magno turbidus imbri
Molibus incurrens validis cum viribus amnis,
Dat sonitu magno stragem ; volvitque sub undis
Grandia faxa, ruit quâ quidquid fluctibus obstat. 290

Sic igitur debent VENTI quoque flamina ferri :
Quæ, veluti validum flumen, cum procubuere
Quamlibet in partem, trudent res ante, ruuntque
Impetibus crebris ; interdum vertice torto
Corripiunt, rapidoque rotanti turbine portant. 295

Quare etiam atque etiam sunt VENTI Corpora cæca :
Quandoquidem factis ac moribus æmula magnis
Amnibus inveniuntur, aperto Corpore qui sunt.

Tum porro varios rerum sentimus ODORES ;
Nec tamen ad nareis venienteis cernimus unquam : 300

Nec calidos ÆSTRUS tuimur, nec FRIGORA quimus
Usurpare oculis, nec VOCES cernere fuemus ;
Quæ tamen omnia Corporea constare necesse est
Natura : quoniam sensus impellere possunt.

TANGERE ENIM ET TANGI, NISI CORPUS, NULLA
POTEST RES. 305

Thus, foul'd by storms, this wasting river rolls
Loud-sounding, forceful 'gainst resisting moles,
Their stones enormous deep midst water throws,
And buries all that dares its pow'r oppose : 370
Just so in blasts are borne the WINDS of heav'n,
Which, like the headlong stream, wherever driv'n
Sweep all before them, raging as they go,
And with repeated gusts destructive blow ;
Oft in their circling eddies things are lost, 375
Or hurl'd in rapid rounds at distance tost.
I say again, WINDS viewless Bodies are ;
In actions and in manners yet compare
With potent streams, which may be view'd, and hence
Are form'd of Atoms evident to sense. 380

Tho' various ODOURS we may smell, our eyes
Cannot discern them to the nostrils rise.

We see not summer's WARMTH, nor winter's COLD ;
The VOICE no mortal ever could behold :
Yet that in nature all these Bodies are, 385
Is plain ; our senses will the fact declare :
FOR NOUGHT BUT BODY, be it understood,
Is TOUCH'D, OR WITH THE POW'R OF TOUCH ENDU'D.

Denique fluctifrago suspensæ in littore Vestes
Uvescunt, eadem dispanfæ in Sole ferescunt ;
At neque quo pacto perfederit humor aquai
Visu est, nec rursus quo pacto fugerit æstu ;
In parvas igitur partes dispergitur Humor, 310
Quas oculi nulla possunt ratione videre.

Quin etiam multis Solis redeuntibus annis
Annulus in digito subtertenuatur habendo :
Stillicidi casus lapidem cavat : uncus aratri
Ferreus occultè decrescit Vomer in arvis ; 315
Strataque jam volgi pedibus detrita viarum
Saxea conspiciamus : tum portas propter ahena
Signa manus dextras ostendunt attenuari
Sæpe salutantum tactu, præterque meantum :
Hæc igitur minui, cum sint detrita, videmus ; 320
Sed quæ Corpora decedant in tempore quoque,
Invida præcludit speciem Natura videndi.

Moreover Garments, when hung near the shore
Which breaks the yeasty waves that o'er it pour, 390
Will imbibe moisture; but let them remain
Spread to the Sun, they soon grow dry again;
How wat'ry Vapour thus could penetrate,
Yet we see not, nor how 'tis lost by heat;
'Tis that it 's scatter'd into parts so fine, 395
Sight can't detect them, or learn how they join.

Worn on some finger many a Solar round,
Fretted beneath away the Ring is found;
By dropping Waters stones are hollow made;
The iron Share at length in earth 's decay'd; 400
We see the pebbly Pavements in each street
Rubb'd smooth by passengers' successive feet;
Beside our doors the brazen Statues plac'd
Shew in some measure their right hands decreas'd,
Touch'd ev'ry day by salutation's throng, 405
Or by the idle as they stroll along:
That these by friction are diminish'd then,
Is evident to sight; but how, or when
Those Particles fly off which things compose,
Invidious Nature never will disclose, 410

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Postremo, quæcunque Dies, Naturaque rebus
Paullatim tribuit, moderatim crescere cogens,
Nulla potest oculorum acies contenta tueri ; 325

Nec porro quæcunque ævo, macieque senescunt :
Nec mare quæ impendent vesco fale Saxa peresa,
Quid quoque amittant in tempore, cernere possis.
Corporibus cæcis igitur Natura gerit res.

Nec tamen undique Corporea stipata tenentur 330
Omnia natura, namque est in rebus INANE.

Quod tibi cognôsse in multis erit utile rebus ;
Nec finet errantem dubitare, et quærere semper
De Summa rerum, et nostris diffidere dictis ;
Quapropter locus est intactus, INANE, vacansque. 335

Quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri
Res possent ; namque officium, quod Corporis extat,
Officere, atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset

Besides, no human ken has pow'r to trace
How Life, and Nature could those atoms place
In due succession, causing things to grow
By gradual unperceiv'd degrees ; or how
They age with time, emaciating away : 415

Nor, in the rude Rocks which o'erhang the sea,
By tasteful salt corroded, none e'er views
The vanish'd portions which thro' time they lose.
That Nature then in secret is possess'd
Of bodies unperceiv'd, must be confess'd. 420

But all 's not Matter solid, and condense ;
There is beside in things a VOID immense :
And this to know will stand thee in much stead,
'Twill clear thy doubts whene'er thou art misled,
Resolve thy questions on the boundless Whole, 425
And stamp conviction on thy wav'ring soul.

A VOID is therefore, and we 'll hold it such,
An empty space admitting not our touch.

Were it not so, we then must clearly see,
Nought could move onward in the least degree ; 430
To hinder and resist are stated laws
Pertaining to all Bodies, and this cause

Omnibus : haud igitur quidquam procedere posset,
Principium quoniam cedendi nulla daret res. 340

At nunc per maria, ac terras, sublimaque cœli,
Multa modis multis varia ratione moveri
Cernimus ante oculos ; quæ, si non esset INANE,
Non tam sollicito motu privata carerent ;
Quam genita omnino nulla ratione fuissent : 345
Undique Materies quoniam stipatâ quiêssent.

Præterea quamvis Solidæ res esse putentur,
Hinc tamen esse licet Raro cum corpore cernas :
In faxis, ac speluncis permanat Aquarum
Liquidus humor, et uberibus flent omnia guttis : 350
Diffusat in corpus sese Cibus omne animantum :
Crescunt Arbusta, et foetus in tempore fundunt,
Quod Cibus in totas, usque ab radicibus imis,
Per truncos, ac per ramos diffunditur omneis ;

At the precise same point of time would bring
To present action each respective thing ;
Nothing by onward motion could be driv'n, 435
If unto nothing yielding pow'rs were giv'n.
But now our vision can distinctly trace
In seas, and earth, and heav'n's high-vaulted space,
Unnumber'd things by ways unnumber'd roll,
As various method regulates the whole ; 440
These, did no VOID exist, were wanting quite
In all those movements which they now excite,
Nor would they generate ; for Matter prest
On ev'ry side must consequently rest.

That bodies thought to have Solidity 445
Still are oft Porous, we may plainly see :
From rocks, and caverns permeant Dew distils ;
They weep unceasing in abundant rills.
Thro'out all Nature's animated reign,
Diffusive Food throws nurture in each vein ; 450
The vigorous Groves with growth luxuriant spread,
And timely fruits are on their boughs display'd ;
From each extremest root their trunks are fill'd,
And distant branches drink the Juice they yield.

Inter septa meant Voces, et clausa domorum 355

Transvolitant : rigidum permanat Frigus ad ossa.

Quod, nisi INANIA sint, quæ possent Corpora quæque
Transire, haud ulla fieri ratione videres.

Denique cur alias aliis præstare videmus

Pondere res rebus, nihilo majore figura? 360

Nam, si tantundem est in Lanæ glomere, quantum

Corporis in Plumbo est, tantundem pendere par est ;

Corporis officium est quoniam premere omnia deorsum :

Contra autem natura manet sine pondere INANIS.

Ergo quod Magnum est æque, Leviusque videtur, 365

Nimirum plus esse sibi declarat INANIS :

At contra Gravius plus in se CORPORIS esse

Dedicat, et multò VACUI minus intus habere.

Est igitur nimirum id, quod ratione sagaci

Quærimus, admistum rebus quod INANE vocamus. 370

Illud in his rebus, ne te deducere vero

Possit, quod quidam fingunt, præcurrere cogor ;

Cedere Squammigeris latices nitentibus aiunt,

Et liquidas aperire vias ; quia post loca Pisces

Sounds will pierce walls, and fly thro' well-shut gates ;

E'en to our bones the sharp Cold penetrates : 456

All which ne'er could be, did we not allow

Of certain VOIDS which bodies might pass through.

Say wherefore these things heavier are than those,

Yet each respecting size no difference knows ? 460

If in a ball of Wool, or lump of Lead,

Like matter were contain'd ; then each, when weigh'd,

Alike would prove without excess of weight ;

For matter tends to make things gravitate :

Whereas a VOID is by its nature free 465

From ev'ry principle of gravity :

What regularly Large and Light then seems,

An ample portion of the VOID proclaims ;

So Bodies, being Ponderous, confess

They more of MATTER than of VOID possess : 470

Therefore that thing our curious search would trace,

What 's term'd a VOID, in nature holds a place.

But, lest thou swerve from truth in our intent,

Doubts rais'd by some in thee I 'd fain prevent :

To Scaly tribes the waters yield, they say, 475

And ope a passage thro' their lucid way :

Linquant, quo possint cedentes confluere undæ : 375

Sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri,

Et mutare locum ; quamvis sint omnia plena :

Scilicet id falsa totum ratione receptum est.

Nam quò Squammigeri poterunt procedere tandem,

Ni spatium dederint latices ? concedere porro 380

Quo poterunt undæ, cum Pisces ire nequibunt ?

Aut igitur motu privandum est corpora quæque ;

Aut esse admistum dicendum est rebus INANE ;

Unde initium primum capiat res quæque movendi.

Postremo duo de concurso Corpora lata 385

Si cita diffiliant, nempe aër omne necesse est,

Inter corpora quod fuvat, possidat INANE.

Is porro, quamvis circum celerantibus auris

Confluat, haud poterit tamen uno tempore totum

Compleri spatium : nam primum quemque necesse est 390

Occupet ille locum, deinde omnia possidantur.

Quod si forte aliquis, cum Corpora diffiluère,

That void which Fish form, as they cleave the tide,
Is sudden by the confluent waves supplied ;
So things may move, and constantly change place
Among themselves, without the need of space. 480
But to such doctrine faith is falsely giv'n :
For whither could these Scaly tribes be driv'n,
Did not the waters room afford ? or where
The waves retire, were Fish not swimming there ?
Then either things from motion must be freed, 485
Or that a VOID exists, must be agreed,
Thro' bodies interspers'd ; whence let 's suppose
Their pow'r to move originally rose.

Again, let two flat Substances close join'd
Sudden dispart ; and straightway we shall find, 490
That 'twixt each substance all the EMPTY SPACE
To just so much of air will soon give place :
Yet, tho' this air may strong and rapid be,
'Twill not at once fill up the vacancy ;
Parts most remote at first are occupied, 495
Then those more central, till the whole 's supplied.

Yet some may haply urge, but judge not right,
That instant, as these Bodies disunite,

Tum putat id fieri, quia se condenscat aër,
Errat ; nam VACUUM tum fit, quod non fuit ante ;
Et repletur item, VACUUM quod constitit ante ; 395
Nec tali ratione potest denserier aër,
Nec si jam posset, sine INANI posset, opinor,
Se ipse in se trahere, et parteis conducere in unum :
Quapropter, quamvis causando multa moreris,
Esse in rebus INANE tamen fateare necesse est. 400

Multaque præterea tibi possum commemorando
Argumenta, fidem dictis conradere nostris ;
Verum animo fatis hæc vestigia parva sagaci
Sunt, per quæ possis cognoscere cætera Tute :
Namque Canes ut montivagæ persæpe feraï 405
Naribus inveniunt intactas frunde quietes,
Cum semel institerunt vestigia certa viâi :
Sic alid ex alio per te Tute ipse videre
Talibus in rebus poteris, cæcasque latebras
Insinuare omneis, et Verum protrahere inde. 410

All this may be perform'd ; because the air
Was, tho' condens'd, already present there ; 500
For then a VOID would be, not there before ;
And the existing VOID would be no more :
Nor could the air, according to such law,
Become condens'd, nor yet itself withdraw
Within itself, and prefs all parts in one ; 505
Or not without a VOID could it be done :
Acknowledge then the VOID ; nor vainly try,
What 's clear by tedious cavil to deny.

But forceful arguments I yet could preach
Might win thy credence to the truths I teach ; 510
Tho' these faint outlines may suffice to learn
The rest, where minds can like thine own discern :
For, as well-scented Hounds are skill'd to trace,
When once the track they hit, each lurking-place
Where, bare of trees, is couch'd the slumb'ring beast 515
That haunts the vasty mountain's savage waste ;
So by thyself Thou, in pursuits like ours,
By seeking one thing mayst acquire fit pow'rs
To find out others, threading each blind maze,
Till Truth is sprung apparent to thy gaze. 520

Quod si pigraris, paullumve abscefferis ab re,
Hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, MEMMI:
Usque adeo largos haustus, è fontibus amneis,
Lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,
Ut verear, ne tarda prius per membra Senectus 415
Serpit, et in nobis Vitaï claustra resolvat,
Quam tibi de quavis una re versibus omnis
Argumentorum fit copia missa per aureis.
Sed nunc jam repetam cœptum pertexere dictis.

Omnis, ut est, igitur, per se, Natura, duabus 420
Consistit rebus; nam CORPORA sunt, et INANE,
Hæc in quo sita sunt, et quâ diversa moventur:
Corpus enim per se communis dedicat esse
Sensus; quo nisi prima fides fundata valebit,
Haud erit occultis de rebus quo referentes 425
Confirmare animi quidquam ratione queamus.
Tum porro Locus, ac Spatium, quod INANE vocamus,
Si nullum foret, haud usquam sita Corpora possent

And from such search unless thou shouldst retire
Incurious, wearied, and without desire ;
This to thy hope, o MEMMIUS ! I 'll afford,
That the learn'd treasures in my soul deep-stor'd,
Drawn from the fount which Epicurus fought, 525
My tuneful tongue shall pour in many a draught ;
Till o'er my limbs Old-age, I fear, would creep,
And Life resolve itself in one long sleep,
Ere all of reas'ning which I fain would say
Should to thy intellect find well its way 530
By means of song. But now let us renew
The task begun, and thus our theme pursue.

Nature, as far as to itself relates,
Is then existing in two sev'ral states,
Body, or Void ; and midst the Void we see 535
Bodies therein contain'd move variously.
That Bodies are, plain reason will avow ;
And all must this first principle allow ;
Else, searching hidden things, we ne'er shall find
Aught to convince, or reconcile the mind. 540
Did not what we call Void, or Room, or Space,
Exist, Bodies could occupy no place ;

Esse, neque omnino quàquam diversa meare ;
Id quod jam supera tibi paullo ostendimus ante. 430

Præterea nihil est, quod possis dicere ab omni
CORPORE sejunctum, secretumque esse ab INANI :

Quod quasi tertia sit numero natura reperta.

Nam quodcunque erit, esse aliquid debebit id ipsum

Augmine vel grandi, vel parvo denique, dum sit ; 435

Quoi si TACTUS erit quamvis levis, exiguusque,

Corporum augebit numerum, summamque sequetur ;

Sin INTACTILE erit, nulla de parte quod ullam

Rem prohibere queat per se transire meantem ;

Scilicet hoc id erit Vacuum, quod INANE vocamus. 440

Præterea, per se quodcunque erit, aut faciet quid,

Aut aliis fungi debebit agentibus ipsum,

Aut erit, ut possint in eo res esse, gerique :

At facere et fungi sine CORPORE nulla potest res :

Nec præbere locum porro, nisi Inane, Vacansque. 445

Nor in such varied manner could they move
But this already was explain'd above.

Again, no BODIES are quite unallied, 545
And nothing is found quite separate from the VOID;
For that would be directly to create,
In things and their arrangement, a third state.
Whate'er exists, while it exists at all,
Must have capacity or great, or small; 550
This, howe'er trifling, or how vast its size,
Can it be TOUCH'D, midst Bodies we comprise:
But, if of no fixt pow'r possess'd to stay
Whatever thro' it would direct its way,
To which the TOUCH can't therefore be applied, 555
'Tis then that unfill'd Space we call a VOID.

Moreover, ev'ry self-existing thing
Must act spontaneous, or to action spring
By other pow'rs; or be what may contain
Things that to action Nature shall ordain: 560
Now 'tis the BODIES' property alone,
Alike to act, and to be acted on;
And for such action nought can means supply
Except that thing, Space or Vacuity.

Ergo præter INANE, et CORPORA, tertia per se
Nulla potest rerum in numero natura relinqui;
Nec, quæ sub sensus cadat ullo tempore nostros,
Nec, ratione animi quam quisquam possit apisci.

Nam quæcunque cluent, aut his CONJUNCTA duabus
Rebus ea invenies; aut horum EVENTA videbis. 451

Conjunctum est id, quod nunquam sine perniciali
Discidio potis est sejungi, seque gregari:

Pondus uti saxi, Calor ignibus, Liquor aquæ,
Tactus Corporibus cunctis, Intactus Inani. 455

Servitium contra, Libertas, Divitiæque,
Paupertas, Bellum, Concordia, cætera, quorum
Adventu manet incolumis Natura, abituque,
Hæc soliti sumus, ut par est, EVENTA vocare.

Tempus item per se non est, sed Rebus ab ipsis 460
Consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in ævo,
Tum quæ Res instet; quid porro deinde sequatur:

BODIES and VOID then comprehend the all, 565
And a third state there 's nothing we can call ;
Nought beside these our senses can believe,
Nor can the scope of reason e'er conceive.

For know, whatever is, you 'll either find
RESULT, or CONJUNCT of these two combin'd ; 570
That we term Conjunct, which ne'er forc'd can be,
Nor sever'd but with fatal injury :
Such quality to stones is native Weight,
To waves Fluidity, to fires their Heat,
To Bodies Tangibility is such, 575
And to the Void Privation of all touch :
Whereas to live in Bondage, or be Free ;
Share Peace, or War ; Riches, or Poverty ;
And like Events, which, happen as they may,
Disturb not Nature in her equal way ; 580
All these respectively RESULT we name,
And to such title rightful is the claim.

Time is not self-existent ; from the mind
Its being springs, which traces far behind
What Acts were done, dwells on each present Deed,
Likewise foretells what future may succeed : 585

Nec per se quemquam **TEMPUS** sentire fatendum est
Semotum ab rerum motu, placidaque quiete.

Denique Tyndaridem raptam, Belloque subactas 465
Trojugenas genteis cum dicunt esse, videndum est,
Ne forte hæc per se, cogant nos esse fateri:

Quando ea sæcla hominum, quorum hæc eventa fuere,
Irrevocabilis abstulerit jam præterita ætas.

Namque aliud Rebus, aliud Regionibus ipsis 470
EVENTUM dici poterit, quodcunque erit actum.

Denique Materies si rerum nulla fuisset,
Nec Locus, ac Spatium, res in quo quæque geruntur;
Nunquam Tyndaridis formæ conflatus amore
Ignis Alexandri Phrygio sub pectore gliscens 475
Clara accendisset sævi certamina belli:

Nec clam durateus Trojæ Pergama partu
Imflammasset equus nocturno Grajugenarum;
Perspicere ut possis Res Gestas funditus omneis,
Non ita, uti **CORPUS**, per se constare, nec esse: 480

Nec ratione cluere eadem, qua constat **INANE**:

That none imagines TIME, must be confest,
As of itself, distinct from act and rest.

In short, when Helen's rape the poets tell,
And how Troy's race subdu'd in Battle fell; 590
Let us beware, we are not forc'd to own
These things have happen'd from themselves alone;
Since ages past, which never can return,
Have swept those men, who caus'd results we mourn:
For whate'er 's acted may be justly thought 595
RESULT of deeds, or climes where deeds were wrought.

Were things not form'd of Matter, nor had Space
Or Room wherein their actions might take place;
Ne'er had hot passion's agonizing pain,
Rais'd in the bosom of the Phrygian Swain 600
By the dire beauties of the Spartan Fair,
Provok'd fell conflicts in the much-fam'd war;
Nor had the horse by night, to Ilion's cost,
Pour'd from its womb of wood the Grecian host.
Actions exist not, to our sense is clear; 605
Nor are they in the state which BODIES are,
Things of themselves; neither can they be deem'd
Like to the VOID, nor of its kind esteem'd:

Sed magis ut meritò possis EVENTA vocare
Corporum, atque Loci, res in quo quæque gerantur.

Corpora sunt porro partim Primordia rerum,
Partim concilio quæ constat principiorum. 485

Sed quæ sunt rerum Primordia, nulla potest vis
Stringere; nam Solido vincunt ea corpore demum:

Et si difficile esse videtur credere quidquam

In rebus Solido reperiri corpore posse;

Transit enim Fulmen cœli per septa domorum, 490

Clamor ut, ac Voces: Ferrum candescit in igne:

Diffiliuntque fero ferventi Saxa vapore:

Conlabefactatus rigor Auri solvitur æstu:

Tum glacies Aëris flamma devicta liquefcit:

Permanat calor Argentum, penetraleque frigus, 495

Quando utrumque, manu retinentes pocula ritè,

Sensimus infuso lympharum rore supernè:

Usque adeo in rebus Solidi nihil esse videtur.

Sed quia vera tamen ratio, naturaque rerum

Cogit, ades, paucis dum versibus expediamus. 500

That actions then are but RESULTS, we prove,
Of Bodies, or of Space in which they move. 610

Bodies are Rudiments of things, we find,
Existing either separate or combin'd;
And these first Rudiments no force can strain,
Their Solid parts will unsubstu'd remain;
Tho' by belief it scarcely will be own'd, 615
That Solid bodies can in things be found.

Thro' roof'd abodes as Voice and Sound will fly,
So will the pealing Thunder of the sky;
In Iron fire a red glow will create,
And Stones will shatter with excessive heat; 620

Firm Gold in flames will to a fluid pass,
And render'd hot fast fuses stubborn Brass;
Thro' Silver penetrates both warmth and cold,
For, in your hands a vase of silver hold,
Water of either kind pour in at top, 625
And warm or cold without you feel the cup.

Nothing in nature therefore would appear
Correctly Solid——Yet attentive hear,
While some short lays the muse repugnant sings,
Urg'd by right reason and true state of things: 630

Esse ea, quæ Solido atque æterno corpore consent,
Semina quæ rerum, Primordiaque esse docemus :
Unde omnis Rerum nunc constet Summa creata.

Principio quoniam duplex natura duarum
Diffimilis rerum longè constare reperta est, 505
Corporum atque Loci, res in quo quæque geruntur ;
Esse utramque sibi per se, puramque necesse est :
Nam quacunque vacat Spatium, quod Inane vocamus ;
CORPUS eà non est : quâ porro cunque tenet se
Corpus, eà vacuum nequaquam constat Inane. 510
Sunt igitur Solida, ac sine Inani Corpora prima.

Præterea quoniam genitis in rebus Inane est,
Materiem circum Solidam constare necesse est :
Nec res ulla potest vera ratione probari
Corpore Inane suo celare, atque intus habere ; 515
Si non, quod cohibet, Solidum constare relinquo.
Id porro nihil esse potest, nisi Materiai
Concilium, quod Inane queat rerum cohibere.
Materies igitur solido quæ corpore constat,
Esse æterna potest, cum cætera dissolvantur. 520

Parts form'd of substance changing not at all,
And Solid too, first Principles we call,
Or Rudiments of things ; 'tis these that frame
All that 's contain'd in great Creation's Scheme.

The twofold nature of two things, we see, 635
Body and Room for motion, disagree ;
Each different is from each : 'tis therefore meet,
Both in themselves be separate and compleat ;
For where that Space exists, which Void we name,
There Body is not : arguing the same ; 640
Where Body is, no perfect Void can be :
Thus, Solid Rudiments from Void are free.

In all created things a Void is found,
And Solid Matter must that Void surround :
For by good sense no bodied thing 's suppos'd 645
To hold, or to conceal a Void inclos'd ;
Unless we grant, that what contains shall be
Endu'd compleatly with Solidity :
This Compact Matter is, must be confest,
Of pow'r to comprehend a Void possess : 650
Then Matter which these Solid parts compose,
While other things decay, no period knows.

Tum porro si nil esset, quod Inane vacaret,
Omne foret Solidum, nisi contra corpora cæca
Essent, quæ loca complerent quæcunque tenerent :
Omne, quod est, Spatium vacuum constaret Inane.
Alternis igitur nimirum Corpus Inani 525
Distinctum est, quoniam nec Plenum naviter extat ;
Nec porro Vacuum : sunt ergo corpora cæca,
Quæ Spatium Pleno possint distinguere Inane.

Hæc neque dissolvi plagis extrinsecus icta
Possunt : nec porro penitus penetrata retexi ; 530
Nec ratione queunt alia tentata labare :
Id quod jam supera tibi paullo ostendimus ante.
Nam neque conlidi sine Inani posse videtur
Quidquam, nec frangi, nec findi in bina secando :
Nec capere humorem, neque item manabile frigus, 535
Nec penetralem ignem, quibus omnia conficiuntur.
Et quam quæque magis cohibet res intus Inane,
Tam magis his rebus penitus tentata labascit.
Ergo, si Solida, ac sine Inani Corpora prima
Sunt, ita uti docui, sint hæc Æterna necesse est. 540

Præterea, nisi Materies Æterna fuisset,

Were there not what 's term'd Void existing, then
All would be Solid. Were there not again
Some bodies filling space by matter fram'd, 655
All would be Emptiness which Void is nam'd:
Body and Void have thus alternate place;
All is not wholly Fulness, nor all Space:
In nature certain bodies do reside,
Distinguishing what 's Full from what is Void. 660

These bodies outwards are not harm'd by blows,
Inwards their texture nought can decompose,
All forceful means uninjur'd they sustain;
But this we've strove already to explain:
For nought can e'er be broke without a Void, 665
Or cleft in twain, or otherwise destroy'd;
Nought imbibe moisture, feel the sharp cold's pow'r,
Or searching flames which all things will devour:
And, in as much as things of Void partake,
By just so much their tendency to break; 670
Therefore when Rudiments from Void are free,
And Solid; then they must Eternal be.

Further, did Matter, which we prov'd but late,
Rest not in one fixt Everlasting state;

Antehac ad Nihilum penitus res quæque redissent;

De Nihiloque renata forent quæcunque videmus.

At quoniam supera docui NIL posse creari

De Nihilo, neque quod genitum est ad NIL revocari:

Esse immortalis Primordia corpore debent, 546

Dissolvi quo quæque supremo tempore possint;

Materies ut suppeditet rebus reparandis.

Sunt igitur Solida Primordia simplicitate,

Nec ratione queunt alia servata per ævum 550

Ex infinito jam tempore res reparare.

Denique, si nullam finem Natura parâset

Frangendis rebus, jam Corpora materiâ

Usque redacta forent, ævo frangente priore,

Ut nihil ex illis à certo tempore posset 555

Conceptum, summum ætatis pervadere florem:

Nam quidvis citius dissolvi posse videmus,

Quam rursus refici. Quapropter longa diei

Infinita ætas anteaacti temporis omnis

All things long since had been reduc'd to Nought, 675
Again to what we see from Nothing brought :
Then as my verse before has told to thee ;
From NOTHING NOTHING can created be,
And what's created can't to NOUGHT return ;
So that first Bodies are immortal born ; 680
And to first Bodies time all being brings,
That Matter may supply decay of things.
Hence then, these native Rudiments, we find,
Are bodies of a simple Solid kind ;
Thro' countless ages else they ne'er could last, 685
To furnish things with Matter from times past.

To things' destruction were no bounds assign'd
By Nature ; all of Matter that's combin'd,
Ere many a fragile age had roll'd away,
Could not but suffer general decay ; 690
So that it asks a tedious length of time,
Ere what such matter forms could reach its prime.
That things can sooner be destroy'd, is plain,
Than to their former state be brought again :
Therefore, whatever age may have laid waste, 695
Throughout th' unmeasur'd space of periods past,

Quod fregisset adhuc, disturbans, dissolvensque, 560
Nunquam reliquo reparari tempore posset :

At nunc nimirum frangendi reddita finis
Certa manet : quoniam refici rem quamque videmus,
Et finita simul generatim tempora rebus
Stare, quibus possint ævi contingere florem. 565

Huc accedit, uti Solidissima Materiai
Corpora cum constant, possint tamen omnia reddi
Mollia, quæ fiant, Aër, Aqua, Terra, Vapores,
Quo pacto fiant, et qua vi cunque genantur,
Admixtum quoniam semel est in rebus Inane. 570

At contra, si Mollia sint Primordia rerum,
Unde queant validi filices, ferrumque creari,
Non poterit ratio reddi. Nam funditus omnis
Principio fundamenti Natura carebit.

Sunt igitur Solidâ pollentia simplicitate 575
Quorum condenso magis omnia conciliatu
Arctari possunt, validasque ostendere vireis.

Dissolving all, disturbing ev'ry where,
Time in no future series can repair.
Destruction then has no determin'd bound,
Since all that we behold renew'd is found; 700
And certain periods to all things pertain,
By which their kinds may due perfection gain.

This too; tho' particles of Matter be
Themselves endu'd with true Solidity;
All Fluid may become which Matter frames, 705
As Vapours, Earth, as Water, or as Flames,
Whate'er their fashion, or their pow'rs affix'd;
For in all things a Void is intermix'd:
But were first Principles of Fluid kind
By nature form'd, how could the reas'ning mind 710
Imagine stubborn flint might grow in earth,
Or fancy to himself the iron's birth?
Creation then would want to work withal
Some fundamental, some original:
Solids are therefore of a simple state; 715
By whose firm union, as 'tis more complete,
All things are to themselves more strictly bound,
And more confess the pow'rs within them found.

Denique jam quoniam generatim reddita finis
Crescendi rebus constat, vitamque tuendi,
Et quid quæque queant per fœdera Naturæ, 580
Quid porro nequeant, sancitum quandoquidem exstat ;
Nec commutatur quidquam, quin omnia constant
Usque adeo, variæ volucres ut in ordine cunctæ
Ostendant maculas generaleis corpori inesse :
Immutabile materiæ quoque corpus habere 585
Debent nimirum. Nam si Primordia rerum
Commūtari aliquā possent ratione revicta,
Incertum quoque jam constet, quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat ; finita potestas denique quouique
Quanam sit ratione, atque alte terminus hærens ; 590
Nec toties possent generatim sæcla referre
Naturam, motus, victum, moresque parentum.

Tum porro, quoniam extremum quouiusque cacumen
Corporis est aliquod, nostri quod cernere sensus
Jam nequeunt ; id nimirum sine partibus exstat, 595
Et Minima constat natura ; nec fuit unquam
Per se secretum, neque posthac esse valebit ;
Alterius quoniam est ipsum pars, primaque, et ima :

As Nature thro' all kinds ordain'd to give
Increase of things, and means by which they live ; 720
As by establish'd laws she teaches what
Things can accomplish, and what they cannot ;
As all contain'd within her ample range
Is what it was, and never felt a change ;
For on the feather'd tribes we constant see 725
Colours distinctive of each family :
So all of beings matter must comprise,
Which no mutation knows, nor ever dies.
Should reason teach us, were it strain'd so far,
That Rudiments of things a change did wear ; 730
Nothing were certain then ; nor could we learn
What beings might, and what might not be born ;
How finite pow'rs are unto all things giv'n,
And to what fixed point they might be driv'n.

Again, th' extreme of bodies we believe 735
Something to be, our senses can't perceive ;
Devoid of parts compounding, it exists ;
And as of Lesser nature it subsists ;
Ne'er of itself it did, or e'er can spring ;
A first, last part 'tis of another thing. 740

Inde aliæ, atque aliæ fimiles ex ordine partes
Agmine condenso naturam Corporis explent. 600

Quæ quoniam per se nequeunt constare, necesse est
Hærere, ut nequeant ulla ratione revelli.

Sunt igitur Solida Primordia simplicitate :

Quæ minimis stipata cohærent partibus arctè ;

Non ex ullorum conventu conciliata, 605

Sed magis æterna pollentia simplicitate :

Unde neque avelli quidquam, neque deminui jam

Concedit Natura reservans femina rebus.

Præterea nisi erit Minimum, Parvissima quæque
Corpora constabunt ex partibus Infinitis ; 610

Quippe ubi dimidiæ partis pars semper habebit

Dimidiam partem, nec res perfiniet ulla :

Ergò rerum inter summam, minimamque quid escit ?

Non erit ut distent : nam quamvis funditus omnis

Summa sit Infinita, tamen Parvissima quæ sunt, 615

Ex Infinitis constabunt partibus æquè.

Quoi quoniam ratio reclamationem vera, negatque

Credere posse animum, victus fateare necesse est,

Th' extreme, in masses that successive rise
With firm increase, all Bodied things supplies ;
And as they separate can't remain, of course
They must adhere, nor be disjoin'd by force :
Solid and pure then Rudiments are found, 745
Form'd of minutest parts compactly bound,
And by no other principles combin'd,
Being of one unvarying simple kind.
These seeds of things Nature reserves with care ;
Nor suffers aught to waste them, or impair. 750

The Smallest bodies, if there were no Least,
Would of parts Infinite be then possess'd ;
And in each half of things would be contain'd
Another half, till numbers knew no end :
And who the diff'rence would discern, that lies 755
'Twixt things of largest, and of smallest size ?
Nor could they differ ; for tho' ev'ry all
Were Infinite ; yet things, however small,
Would in their texture still compounded be
Of parts possessing like Infinity. 760

But since true sense revolts, nor yields assent ;
Let us convinc'd acknowledge with content,

Esse ea quæ nullis jam prædita partibus exstent,
Et Minima constant natura. Quæ quoniam sunt, 620
Illa quoque esse tibi Solida, atque Æterna fatendum.

Denique ni Minimas in parteis cuncta resolvi
Cogere consuêssent rerum Natura creatrix,
Jam nihil ex illis eadem reparare valeret :
Propterea quia, quæ multis sunt partibus aucta, 625
Non possunt ea, quæ debet Genitalis habere
Materies, varios Connexus, Pondera, Plagas,
Concurfus, Motus, per quæ res quæque geruntur.

Porro, si nulla est frangendis reddita finis
Corporibus, tamen ex æterno tempore quædam 630
Nunc etiam superare necesse est Corpora rebus,
Quæ nondum clueant ullo tentata periculo :
At quoniam fragili natura prædita constant,
Discrepat æternum tempus potuisse manere
Innumerabilibus plagis vexata per ævum. 635

Quapropter qui Materiem rerum esse putârunt
Ignem, atque ex igni summam consistere solo,
Magnopere à vera lapsi ratione videntur

Bodies there may be of no parts possest,

Sharing alone the nature of a Least.

Then, if they do exist, let us agree

765

That Solid and Eternal they must be.

If Nature, from whose womb all being springs,

Into Least parts did not resolve all things

By strong compulsion, she had ne'er supplied

The loss of ev'ry being as it died ;

770

For bodies form'd of various parts are not

Endu'd with pow'rs Creative Matter's got,

Such as Connexions, Weight, Agreement, Force,

Or Motion ; by which things perform their course.

Were dissolution's limits not confin'd ;

775

Some Bodies sure must be with things combin'd,

Which in themselves are of immortal date,

Unharm'd by violence however great :

But, as all things are form'd by nature frail,

So false a judgment never could prevail,

780

As that thro' ages they 'd remain secure,

Yet various vexing injuries endure.

But from the doctrines of right reason those

Appear to deviate, who would Fire suppose

HERACLITUS init quorum dux praelia primus,
Clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inaneis, 640
Quamde graveis inter Graios, qui vera requirunt.

Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur, amantque
Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt :

Veraque constituunt, quæ bellè tangere possunt
Aureis, et lepidò quæ sunt fucata sonore. 645

Nam cur tam variæ res possent esse, requiro,
Ex uno si sunt Igni, puroque creatæ ?

Nil prodesset enim calidum denserier Ignem,

Nec rarefieri, si partes Ignis eandem

Naturam, quam totus habet super Ignis, habere. 650

Acrior Ardor enim conductis partibus esset :

Languidior porro disiectis, disque supatis.

Amplius hoc fieri nihil est, quod posse rearis

Talibus in causis, nedum variantia rerum

Tanta queat densis rarisque ex ignibus esse. 655

First Principle of things, and idly deem 785

'Tis that alone fills up creation's scheme :

The man who dar'd in this new cause engage

Was its prime chief, HERACLITUS the sage ;

He rather gain'd repute among th' unwise,

By the dark phrase more learned Greeks despise 790

Who covet truth ; for only fools esteem

What couch'd in hard, ambiguous words would seem :

They call that truth by which their ears are caught,

Or what's in flimsy jingling language taught.

Whence rise such various offsprings, I inquire, 795

Were things compos'd of perfect real Fire ?

Whether condens'd, or whether rarefied,

It matters not ; if, when its parts divide,

Each separate part by nature has the state

Which the same Fire possess'd when 'twas complete : 800

If more condens'd, its Heat has more excess ;

Refin'd and subtiliz'd, its heat is less :

Nought beyond this our senses can conceive

Such causes could effect : nor yet believe,

That all the various beings we behold 805

From fire condens'd or rare their births unfold.

Atque Hi, si faciant admistum rebus Inane,
Denferi poterunt Ignes, rarique relinqui :
Sed, quia multa sibi cernunt contraria, mussant,
Et fugitant in rebus Inane relinquere purum, et,
Ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera viai : 660

Nec rursus cernunt exempto rebus Inani,
Omnia denferi, fierique ex omnibus unum
Corpus, nil ab se quod possit mittere raptim,
Æstifer Ignis uti lumen jacet, atque vaporem :
Ut videas non è stipatis partibus esse. 665

Quod si forte ulla credunt ratione potesse
Igneis in cœtu stringui, mutareque corpus ;
Scilicet ex ulla facere id si parte reparcent,
Occidet ad Nihilum nimirum funditus Ardor
Omnis, et ex Nihilo fient quæcunque creantur. 670
Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuò hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante ;

Would these Philosophers indeed think fit,
A Void immixt with bodies to admit ;
It could not then with reason be denied,
That Fire might be condens'd or rarefied : 810
But, since against their tenets much is known,
They murmur, and a perfect Void disown ;
Shunning the path that's difficult, they stray
Further from simple truth's unerring way ;
And see not, should we with the Void dispense, 815
That all things would of course become condense,
Each being of one self same nature be,
And nothing of its own have progeny :
Thus burning Flames, which cast forth light and heat,
Are not with compact particles replete. 820

Should some believe, by means however strange,
That Fires when congregate would quench, and change
Their natures quite. If they allow, I say,
That this were once perform'd in any way ;
Then all of Fire resolv'd to Nothing dies, 825
And from the Nothing still new bodies rise.
For things, which chang'd thro' Nature's limits pass,
Are said to suffer death, and to surcease :

Proinde aliquid superare necesse est incolume olli,
Ne tibi res redeant ad Nilum funditus omnes,
De Nihiloque renata virescat copia rerum. 675

Nunc igitur, quoniam certissima corpora quædam
Sunt, quæ conservant naturam semper eandem,
Quorum abitu, aut aditu, mutatoque ordine, mutant
Naturam res, et convertunt corpora sese;

Scire licet non esse hæc Ignea corpora rerum. 680

Nil referret enim quædam decedere, abire,
Atque alia attribui, mutarique ordine quædam,
Si tamen Ardoris naturam cuncta tenerent.

Ignis enim foret omnimodis, quodcunque crearent.

Verum, ut opinor, ita est: sunt quædam Corpora,

quorum 685

Concurfus, Motus, Ordo, Positura, Figuræ,

Efficiunt Ignes, mutatoque ordine mutant

Naturam; neque sunt Igni simulata, neque ullæ

'Tis needful then some principles should be,
Which in themselves are from destruction free ; 830
Left all of things should be reduc'd to Nought,
Again from Nothing into being brought.

Therefore, compris'd in Nature's ample range,
Some bodies are whose qualities ne'er change ;
Whose absence, presence, transposition make 835
All things of diff'rent properties partake,
New bodies form of those before combin'd ;
Yet is their matter of no Igneous kind :
For what avails that particles should die,
And other particles their room supply, 840
Or shift their rank, or from their place retire ?
Since all would still be in its nature Fire :
Whate'er they fashion'd, and in whate'er way,
Were Fire ; let be the being what it may.

But this would to my sense the truth appear : 845
That Bodies of a certain sort there are,
Whose due Assemblage, Motion, Order, Site,
And Shape, to generate all Fire unite ;
These in an instant will their nature lose,
If their position we to change expose ; 850

Præterea reji, quæ corpora mittere possit
Sensibus, et nostros adjectu tangere tactus. 690

Dicere porro Ignem res omneis esse, neque ullam
Rem veram in numero rerum constare, nisi Ignem,
Quod facit HIC IDEM, perdelirum esse videtur.
Nam contra Sensus ab Sensibus ipse repugnat :
Et labefactat eos, unde omnia credita pendent : 695

Unde hic cognitus est ipsi, quem nominat Ignem:
Credit enim Sensus Ignem cognoscere verè,
Cætera non credit, nihilò quæ clara minus sunt :
Quod mihi cum vanum, tum delirum esse videtur.
Quò referemus enim ? Quid nobis certius ipsis 700
Sensibus esse potest, quò vera ac falsa notemus?

Præterea, quare quisquam magis Omnia tollat,
Et velit Ardoris naturam relinquere solam,
Quam neget esse Ignis, Summam tamen esse relinquat ?
Æqua videtur enim dementia dicere utrumque. 705

Unlike to Fire are they, to all unlike
That proves our touch, or can our senses strike.

To say that things are form'd of Fire alone,
That except Fire no principle is known
Creation through, and such is this MAN's theme, 855
Seems to our judgment madness in th' extreme;

He by his Senses contradicts his Sense,
Destroys whate'er to credence gives pretence:

What he terms Fire, is only understood
By Senses wherewithal he is endu'd: 860

Sense to know Fire distinctly would appear;

Yet Elements, as evident, as clear,
Sense comprehends not. This confess must be

A foolish, palpable absurdity.

What but our Senses ought to be believ'd? 865

Rightly by them is true, or false perceiv'd.

Wherefore should we all Principles deny,
Admitting that of Fire alone? Or why

Should we again Fire only disavow,

And Nature's other Principles allow? 870

This doctrine to reject, or that retain,

Alike would be ridiculous and vain.

Quapropter qui Materiem rerum esse putarunt
Ignem, atque ex Igni Summam consistere posse :
Et qui principium gignundis Aëra rebus
Constituere : aut Humorem quicumque putârunt
Fingere res ipsum per se : Terramve creare 710
Omnia, et in rerum naturas vertier omneis :
Magnopere à vero longèque errâsse videntur.

Adde etiam qui conduplicant primordia rerum,
Aëra jungentes Igni, Terramque Liquori :
Et qui Quattuor ex rebus posse omnia rentur, 715
Ex Igni, Terrâ, atque Animâ procrefcere, et Imbri.

Quorum Acragantinus cumprimis EMPEDOCLES est :
Insula quem Triquetris terrarum gessit in oris :
Quam fluitans circum magnis amfractibus æquor
Ionium glaucis adspersgit virus ab undis : 720
Angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Italiæ terrai oras à finibus ejus :
Hic est vasta Charybdis, et hîc Ætnæa minantur

Those then who think that Fire created All,
As Matter perfect and original;
Those too who fancy that all being springs 875
From Air, as the first principle of things;
Or of itself that Water can give birth
To bodies; or believe that plastic Earth
Can fashion all, can ev'ry nature share;
Seem from the paths of truth to wander far. 880

Nor less do those, who rudiments combine;
Mix Air with Fire, and Earth with Water join;
Thinking, to frame the whole, they but require
Four elements; Air, Water, Earth, and Fire.

The first of such philosophers as these 885
Was Agrigentum's boast, EMPEDOCLES;
Born on that Isle, where, tow'ring to the skies,
From its three shores three Promontories rise;
Round which th' Ionian sea with azure waves
Winds tortuous, mighty, and each confine laves; 890
While one small strait, form'd of impetuous tides,
From its own coast the Latian realm divides:
See there Charybdis its vast whirlpool spread;
And Ætna there uplift its smoking head,

Murmura flammarum rursus se conligere iras,
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evomat igneis; 725
Ad cœlumque ferat flammæ fulgura rursus :
Quæ quom magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visendaque fertur,
Rebus opima bonis, multa munita virûm vi :
Nil tamen hoc habuisse Viro præclarius in se, 730
Nec sanctum magis, et mirum, carumque videtur.
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, et exponunt præclara reperta ;
Ut vix humanâ videatur stirpe creatus.

Hic tamen, et supera quos diximus, inferiores 735
Partibus egregie multis, multoque minores ;
Quamquam multa benè, ac divinitus invenientes,
Ex adyto tanquam cordis responsa dedere.
Sanctius, et multò certa ratione magis, quam
Pythia, quæ tripode ex Phœbi, lauroque profatur ; 740
Principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas,
Et graviter Magni magno cecidere ibi casu.

With murmurs deep it threatens to collect 895
Its brooding anger, and in flames eject ;
From its black jaws to vomit forth the blaze,
And make heav'n's concave glitter with its rays.
Tho' much this land by strangers is esteem'd,
And worthy note from various causes deem'd ; 900
Tho' various blessings to the clime belong,
And num'rous tribes its peopled surface throng ;
Yet it held nought so sacred, dear, admir'd,
As this fam'd Man by Wisdom's song inspir'd,
Which, from his lips sweet pour'd, such secrets taught,
That scarce of mortal lineage he was thought. 906
But he, with other sages far less fam'd,
Less vers'd in science, whom before we nam'd ;
Altho' they prophesied both much, and well
In what's divine ; and oracles could tell, 910
Which from their inmost soul's recesses broke,
More true and hallow'd than e'er Pythia spoke,
When on the tripod at his shrine she stood,
Or from the laurel breath'd which crown'd her God :
Yet things' first principles they could not scan, 915
And in the search they fell with this great Man.

Primum, quod motus, exempto rebus Inani,
Constituunt, et res molleis, rarasque relinquunt,
Aëra, Solem, Ignem, Terras, Animalia, Frugeis : 745
Nec tamen admiscent in eorum corpus Inane.

Deinde quod omnino finem non esse secandis
Corporibus faciunt, neque pausam stare fragori :
Nec prorsum in rebus Minimum consistere quidquam :
Cum videamus id extremum quoïusque cacumen 750
Esse quod ad sensus nostros Minimum esse videtur :
Conjicere ut possis ex hoc, quod cernere non quis,
Extremum quod habent, Minimum consistere rebus.

Huc accedit item, quod jam primordia rerum
Mollia constituunt, quæ nos nativa videmus 755
Esse, et mortali cum corpore funditus ; atqui
Debeat ad Nihilum jam rerum Summa reverti,
De Nihiloque renata virescere copia rerum :
Quorum utrumque quid à vero jam distet, habebas.

Deinde inimica modis multis sunt, atque venena 760
Ipse sibi inter se ; quare aut congressa peribunt,

First then, tho' motion is by them receiv'd,
The Void is notwithstanding unbeliev'd :
Things, they allow, may be both moist and rare ;
As Corn, Earth, Animals, Fire, Sun, and Air : 920
Still will these same philosophers contend,
Nothing of Void can in their beings blend.

Bodies, they say, divide them how you will,
Continue subject to division still,
Reduc'd to portions infinitely small ; 925
And that in things there is no Least at all :
Yet their extremes at some one point must rest,
Which to our sense is obviously a Least ;
Then that same point, too subtile to be view'd,
Is of each thing its Least, we may conclude. 930

Soft too they fancy rudiments of things ;
Tho' fragile each, and each from nature springs :
If so, Creation would to Nought return,
And beings would again of Nought be born ;
Both which assertions, as before we prov'd, 935
Are far far distant from the truth remov'd.

Some principles to others poison are,
Waging in various ways perpetual war ;

Aut ita diffugient, ut tempestate coërta,
Fulmina diffugere, atque imbreis ventosque videmus.

Denique Quattuor ex rebus si cuncta creantur,
Atque in eas rursus res omnia dissolvuntur, 765

Quæ magis illa queunt rerum Primordia dici,
Quam contra res illorum, retroque putari?

Alternis gignuntur enim, mutantque colorem,
Et totam inter se naturam tempore ab omni :

Sin ita fortè putas, Ignis, Terræque coire 770

Corpus, et Aërias auras, Roremque liquorum,

Nil in concilio naturam ut mutet eorum :

Nulla tibi ex illis poterit res esse creata,

Non Animans, non Exanimo quid corpore, ut Arbos :

Quippe suam quidque in cœtu variantis acervi 775

Naturam ostendet, mistusque videbitur Aër

Cum Terra simul, atque Ardor cum Rore manere :

At Primordia gignundis in rebus oportet

Naturam clandestinam, cœcamque adhibere,

These, when assembled, in the conflict die ;
Or, widely scatt'ring, from each other fly : 940

So we behold dispers'd, by tempests driv'n,
The winds, the thunders, and the storms of heav'n.

Form'd of Four elements if all were thought,
And to those elements again all brought ;
Why should they rather Rudiments be deem'd, 945
Than things they form be Rudiments esteem'd ?

Thro' ages these have been by turns produc'd,
Their fashions, textures interchang'd, and loos'd.
But shouldst thou probably expect to find,
Fire's matter may be with the Earth's combin'd, 950

That airy Blasts with liquid Dews might blend,
And that no change their union would attend :
Know ; thus commixt, nought can be born of these,
Animate, or Inanimate, as Trees :

Yet, in such mafs of wild variety, 955
Each holding still its native state you'd see ;
Both Air and Earth, tho' blent, wou'd be entire ;
Water remain distinct amid the Fire.

But Rudiments of things, whate'er things are,
Should all one secret, unseen nature share ; 960

Emineat ne quid, quod contra pugnet, et obstet, 780

Quò minus esse queat propriè, quodcunque creatur.

Quin etiam repetunt à cœlo, atque ignibus ejus,

Et primum faciunt Ignem se vertere in Auras

Aëris ; hinc Imbrem gigni, Terramque creari

Ex Imbri, retroque à Terra cuncta reverti, 785

Humorem primum, post Aëra, deinde Calorem :

Nec cessare hæc inter se mutare, mœare

De Cœlo ad Terram, de Terra ad Sidera Mundi :

Quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto.

Immutabile enim quiddam superare necesse est, 790

Ne res ad Nihilum redigantur funditus omnes.

Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,

Continuò hoc mors est illius, quod fuit antè.

Quapropter, quoniam quæ paullo diximus antè,

In commutatum veniunt, constare necesse est 795

Ex aliis ea, quæ nequeant convertier unquam :

Ne tibi res redeant ad Nilum funditus omnes.

That nought obtrusive might arise, to make
Things of less seeming harmony partake.

The changeful elements this sect requires
Are all deriv'd from heav'n, and from heav'n's fires :
First, airy Blasts are products of their heat ; 965
Next, falling Rain the airy Blasts beget ;
And Earth is fashion'd of the falling Rain ;
Then all from Earth trace back their course again :
Water, and Air, and Fire are duly found
To interchange in one successive round ; 970
From Heav'n to Earth, from Earth to Heav'n they go
Up to those Stars which light the World below :
This, no first principle, no primal cause,
Cou'd e'er accomplish by acknowledg'd laws :
Something immutable must then be born, 975
Lest unto Nothing all things should return ;
For things, which chang'd thro' Nature's limits pass,
Are said to suffer death, and to surcease :
Wherefore those bodies, as before was taught,
In which decided changes can be wrought, 980
Of bodies must consist to change unknown ;
Or all long since to Nothing must have gone.

Quin potius tali natura prædita quædam
Corpora constituas, Ignem si forte creârint,
Posse eadem demptis paucis, paucisque tributis, 800
Ordine mutato, et motu, facere Aëris auras :
Sic alias aliis rebus mutarier omneis.

At manifesta palam res indicat, inquis, in auras
Aëris è Terra res omneis crescere, aliquæ ;
Et nisi tempestas indulget tempore fausto, 805
Imbribus, et tabe nimborum arbuſta vacillant :
Solque ſua pro parte fovet, tribuitque calorem :
Crescere non poſſint Fruges, Arbuſta, Animantes.
Scilicet : et niſi nos Cibus aridus, et tener Humor
Adjuvat, amiſſo jam corpore, vita quoque omnis 810
Omnibus è nervis atque oſſibus exſolvatur :
Adjutamur enim dubio procul, atque alimur nos
Certis ab rebus, certis aliæ atque aliæ res.

Then rather certain particles admit,
Which, by their inbred properties if fit
To form the element of Fire, we may, 985
By adding some, or taking some away,
By changing or their action, or their state,
Transform, and airy Blasts at once create :
So various things may in like manner be
Converted into others variously. 990

But vulgar fact, thou say'st, must clearly show,
That things will thrive in Air, in Earth will grow ;
And, if the season with indulgent show'rs
Fosters not timely ; and the budding bow'rs
Wave not refresh'd, when gladd'ning rain descends, 995
When the sun too his heat and influence lends ;
Then of all Fruits and Trees the growth must cease,
And no one Animal could have increase.
Granted—And we without substantial Food,
And subtile Juices to renew our blood, 1000
Long since had felt our mortal frames decay,
And bones and finewy strength had worn away :
Nurtur'd we are no doubt by certain means,
And other things some certain mode sustains.

Nimirum quia multimodis communia multis
Multarum rerum in rebus Primordia multa 815
Sunt, ideo variis variæ res rebus aluntur.
Atque eadem magni refert Primordia sæpe
Cum quibus, et quali positura contineantur;
Et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque.
Namque eadem Coelum, Mare, Terras, Flumina, Solem
Constituunt; eadem Fruges, Arbusta, Animanteis: 821
Verum aliis, alioque modo commista moventur.

Quin etiam passim nostris in Versibus ipsis
Multa Elementa vides multis communia verbis:
Cum tamen inter se Versus, ac verba necesse est 825
Confiteare et re, et sonitu distare sonanti:
Tantum Elementa queunt permutato ordine solo:
At rerum quæ sunt Primordia, plura adhibere
Possunt, unde queant variæ res quæque creari.

Nunc et ANAXAGORAE scrutemur OMOIOMEPIAN,
Quam Graji memorant, nec nostrâ dicere linguâ 831
Concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas:

For common Principles of many a kind 1005
In many a manner are with things combin'd :
All beings therefore variously derive
The various aliment by which they live :
And oft 'tis meet to know, in reason's school,
What Rudiments unite, and by what rule, 1010
What movements midst themselves they give and take ;
Since the same Rudiments for certain make
Both Sun and Heav'n, the Sea, the Floods, the Earth ;
Hence too, Fruits, Trees, and Animals have birth :
But various as they mix, they various move, 1015
And various changes in succession prove.

This from the Verse I write may be inferr'd,
Where many a letter makes up many a word ;
Yet ev'ry word, and Verse, it must be own'd,
Are widely diff'rent both in sense, and sound : 1020
Such change can Letters by their pow'r produce ;
If we but change their order, and their use.

The HOMÆOMERY now claims our thought,
Which ANAXAGORAS to Grecians taught,
Who nam'd it thus : this in one word to speak, 1025
Our country's diction proves too poor, too weak ;

Sed tamen ipsam rem facile est exponere verbis,
Principium rerum quam dicit OMOIOMEPIAN:

Offa videlicet de pauxillis atque minutis 835

Offibus: sic et de pauxillis atque minutis

Visceribus Viscus gigni: Sanguenque creari

Sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibus guttis:

Ex Aurique putat micis consistere posse

Aurum: et de Terris Terram concreescere parvis: 840

Ignibus ex Igneis; Humorem ex Humoribus esse:

Cætera consimili fingit ratione, putatque.

Nec tamen esse ulla parte IDEM in rebus Inane
Concedit, neque corporibus finem esse secandis:

Quare in utraque mihi pariter ratione videtur 845

Errare, atque ILLI, supera quos diximus ante.

Adde quod imbecilla nimis Primordia fingit,
Si primordia sunt, simili quæ prædita constant
Natura, atque ipsæ res sunt; æquèque laborant,
Et pereunt, neque ab exitio res ulla refrænat: 850

Nam quid in oppressu valido durabit eorum,

Ut Mortem effugiat lethi sub dentibus ipsis?

Ignis? an Humor? an Aura? quid horum? Sanguis?

an Os?

Nil, ut opinor, ubi ex æquo res funditus omnis

Yet with no labour'd language shall my strain
This fancied principle of things explain:
Bones are, for instance, form'd of lesser Bones,
And lesser Entrails ev'ry Entrail owns; 1030
Blood's drops commingling form the Blood that flows,
And massive Gold Gold's finer grains compose;
Minute particles of Earth conspire
To form compacted Earth, as Fire forms Fire;
Water from Water springs: and by such laws 1035
He fashions all things, gives to all a cause.

Still to the Void in no wise HE 'll give place,
Or think a thing's division e'er can cease;
But in both cases sure he argues wrong,
And likewise THOSE foremention'd in my song. 1040

Besides, he fashions Rudiments too frail;
For did in them such qualities prevail
As things possess; they with them equally
Would perish, waste, and unprevented die:
For these could none withstand oppressive pow'r, 1045
When Death his jaws wide opens to devour:
Could either Fire, or Water? or could Air?
Could our life's Blood, our Bones?—None could, 'tis
clear:

Tam mortalis erit, quàm quæ manifesta videmus 855

Ex oculis nostris aliqua vi victa perire.

At neque recidere ad Nihilum res posse, neque autem

Crescere de Nihilo, testor res ante probatas.

Præterea quoniam Cibus auget corpus, alitque :

Scire licet, nobis Venas, et Sanguen, et Ossa, 860

Et Nervos alienigenis ex partibus esse :

Sine Cibus omneis commisto corpore dicent

Esse, et habere in se Nervorum corpora parva,

Ossaque et omnino Venas, parteisque Cruoris :

Fiet, uti Cibus omnis et aridus, et liquor ipse, 865

Ex alienigenis rebus constare putetur,

Ossibus, et Nervis, Venisque, et Sanguine misto.

Præterea quæcunque è Terra corpora crescunt :

Si sunt in Terris, Terras constare necesse est

Ex alienigenis, quæ Terris exoriuntur. 870

Transfer item, totidem verbis utare licebit :

In Lignis si flamma latet, fumusque, cinisque ;

Then all alike would suffer death of course,
As what our eyes behold destroy'd by force: 1050
But this great maxim 's prov'd, which none denies;
Things can't to Nothing sink, from Nothing rise.

Since 'tis by means of Food our bodies grow,
And gain increase; we surely must allow,
That Veins, and Blood, and Bones, and Nerves, all are
Compos'd of parts truly dissimilar: 1056
Now, if they say that Food of ev'ry kind
Is of a nature compound and combin'd,
And those small fibres in itself contains
Which form Blood's life-drops, Nerves, and Bones, and
Veins; 1060

Then will this simple argument have weight;
That, in a solid, or a fluid state,
Of parts dissimilar consists all Food,
Of Bones, of Nerves, of Veins, of mingled Blood.

Further, if Earth be granted to contain 1065
All that springs forth from Earth; it follows then,
Earth would of such dissimilarities
Be duly form'd as out of Earth arise.
Vary the subject, but the language keep.
In Wood if flame, and smoke, and ashes sleep, 1070

Ex alienigenis consistant Ligna necesse est.

Linquitur hic tenuis latitandi copia quædam :

Id quod ANAXAGORAS sibi sumit, ut omnibus omneis

Res putet immistas rebus latitare : sed illud 876

Apparere unum, cuius sint plura mista,

Et magis in promptu, primaque in fronte locata :

Quod tamen à vera longe ratione repulsum est.

Conveniebat enim Fruges quoque sæpe minutas, 880

Robore quom fangi franguntur, mittere signum

Sanguinis, aut aliûm nostro quæ corpore aluntur :

Cum Lapidum Lapidem terimus, manare cruorem.

Consimili ratione Herbas quoque sæpe decebat,

Et laticis dulceis guttas, similique sapore, 885

Mittere, lanigeræ quali sunt ubera lactis :

Scilicet et Glebis terrarum sæpe friatis

Herbarum genera, et frugeis, frundeisque videri

Dispertita, atque in Terris latitare minutè :

'Till wak'd to action ; then must we suppose,
That Wood things thus dissimilar compose.

But room for subterfuge here open lies,
Which ANAXAGORAS himself applies :

All things, he says, are with all things combin'd 1075

By secret mixture ; but that thing we find

Alone is seen, whose parts have most extent

Throughout the whole, and are most prominent ;

But sure, to argue in a style like this,

Repugnant reason much must deem amiss : 1080

For by the pond'rous stone when Corn is ground,

Then in that Corn would signs of blood be found,

Or whate'er feeds our frames ; and blood would gush,

When Rocks' huge fragments smaller fragments crush ;

By the same reason, Plants would oft distil 1085

From their sweet pores full many a milky rill,

Alike in flavour to the juice we drain

From the rich udders of the fleecy train ;

In clods of crumbling earth we should behold

Herbs of all kinds, and fruits, and leaves unfold 1090

Their sev'ral rudiments, which wide in Earth

Lie scatter'd and conceal'd, till call'd to birth ;

Postremo, in Lignis cinerem fumumque videri, 890

Quom præfracta forent, igneisque latere minutos.

Quorum nil fieri quoniam manifesta docet res,

Scire licet non esse in rebus res ita mistas :

Verum Semina multimodis immista latere

Multarum rerum in rebus communia debent. 895

At sæpe in magnis fit montibus, inquis, ut altis

Arboribus vicina cacumina summa terantur

Inter se, validis facere id cogentibus Austris,

Donec Flammai fulserunt flore coörto;

Scilicet : et non est lignis tamen insitus Ignis, 900

Verùm Semina sunt Ardoris multa, terendo

Quæ quom confluxêre, creant incendia sylvis,

Quod si facta foret sylvis abscondita flamma,

Non possent ullum tempus celarier Ignes :

Conficerent volgò sylvas, Arbusta cremarent. 905

Jamne vides igitur, paullo quod diximus ante,

Permagni referre eadem Primordia sæpe

Wood might discover likewise, when 'tis broke,

Ashes, and latent sparks of fire, and smoke :

As these appearances we then ne'er find, 1095

Things can't be in such mode with things combin'd ;

But Seeds pertaining to all things, we 'll say,

In things lie hid and mixt in many a way.

Yet this example thou wilt urge, I know :

It happens oft on the big mountain's brow, 1100

Where trees close set in tow'ring verdure rise,

And wave their mingled heads amid the skies,

That, by the rude South shook, their boughs conspire

To kindle with fierce friction blazing Fire.

Granted. 'Tho' wood contains no Fire inbred ; 1105

But many Seeds of Fire are widely spread

Throughout its texture, and, whene'er they meet,

By strong collision form the flaming heat,

Destructive to the forest. Had Fire lain

Within the trees, it could not long remain ; 1110

One conflagration had the forest raz'd,

And ev'ry Shrub in the vast ruin blaz'd.

Is not that certain then, which late we taught :

It matters much how Principles are brought

Cum quibus, et quali positura contineantur,
Et quos inter se dent motus, accipiantque,
Atque eadem paullo inter se mutata creare 910

Ignéis è Lignis, quo pacto Verba quoque ipsa
Inter se paullo mutatis sunt elementis,
Quom LIGNA, atque IGNEIS distincta voce notemus?

Denique jam quæcunque in rebus cernis apertis,
Si fieri non posse putas, quin Materiai 915
Corpora consimili natura prædita fingas,
Hæc ratione tibi pereunt Primordia rerum:
Fiet uti risu tremulo concussa cachinnent,
Et lacrymis falsis humectent ora, genasque.

Nunc age, quod superest, cognosce, et clarius audi.
Nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura, sed acri 921

In order, with what Principles they blend, 1115
What movements midst themselves they take or lend,
How by a little interchange they make
What once was Wood Fire's properties partake?
And by like reas'ning, if in any Word
To different parts the letters be transferr'd, 1120
Words different they shew in sense and sound;
Like letters thus in LEFT or FELT * are found.

Shouldst thou believe, things obvious to thy view
Could not be fram'd, unless thou mightst endue
Their Rudiments with nature just the same 1125
As is the body's nature which they frame;
Then at this rate all Principles would die:
For, particles of parts which laugh or cry,
As struck, would laughing shake their little sides,
Or down their cheeks roll sorrow's briny tides. 1130

Now learn the rest; what's plainly told thee, hear!
Full well I know the subject is not clear;

* The two words LIGNA and IGNES, *woods* and *fires*, chosen by Lucretius for this anagrammatic example in Latin, would not answer in English; I have therefore substituted two others, which give the example somewhat more correctly.

Percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor,
Et simul incussit suavem mihi in pectus amorem
Musarum : quo nunc instinctus, mente vigenti
Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante 925
Trita solo : juvat integros accedere fonteis,
Atque haurire : juvatque novos decerpere flores ;
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
Unde prius nulli velârint tempora Musæ :
Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, et arctis 930
RELLIGIONUM animos nodis exsolvere pergo :
Deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
Carmina, Musæo contingens cuncta lepore,
Id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur :
Sed veluti pueris absinthia tetra medentes 935
Quom dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
Contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
Ut puerorum ætas improvida ludificetur
Labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum
Absinthii laticem, deceptaque non capiatur, 940
Sed potius tali facto recreata vale scat :
Sic ego nunc, quoniam hæc Ratio plerumque videtur
Tristior esse, quibus non est tractata, retroque

But hop'd-for praise goads on my eager soul,
And the sweet Muses my fond breast controul :
Thus urg'd, those rude paths boldly I explore 1135
Of Helicon, which none e'er trod before :
To undiscover'd founts it joys to go,
And quaff ; to cull flow'rs yet ne'er known to blow ;
And plait a glorious garland for my head,
Such as the Nine o'er poet's brow ne'er spread. 1140
First lofty themes I try, then would unbind
RELIGION's shackles which inthrall the mind ;
On subjects dark the brilliant song I raise,
With sweets Poetic temp'ring all my lays ;
Nor deem it wrong : For, would physicians fain 1145
The wormwood's bitter draught make children drain ;
They first the honey's luscious yellow juice
Upon the cup's containing brim produce ;
That infancy may thus unheedful sip
The nauseous potion with its cheated lip, 1150
Swallow the drug, unharm'd altho' allur'd,
And be at length by the deception cur'd.
So I, because my Doctrine may appear,
To those who scan it not, much too severe ;

Volgus abhorret ab hac ; volui tibi suaviloquenti
Carminе Pierio Rationem exponere nostram, 945
Et quasi Musæo dulci contingere melle,
Si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
Versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
Naturam rerum, qua constet compta figura.

Sed quoniam docui, solidissima Materiai 950
Corpora perpetuò volitare invicta per ævom ;
Nunc age, summaï quædam sit finis eorum,
Necne sit, evolvamus : item, quod Inane repertum est,
Seu locus, ac spatium, res in quo quæque gerantur,
Pervideamus utrum finitum funditus OMNE 955
Constet, an Immensum pateat vel adusque profundum.

OMNE quod est, igitur, nulla regione viarum
Finitum est : nam quâ Extremum debebat habere ?
Extremum porro nullius posse videtur
Esse, nisi ultra sit quod finiat, ut videatur, 960
Quò non longius hæc sensus natura sequatur.

And, as the vulgar may disgusted be ; 1155

I meant in strains of tempting Poesy,

Strains which Pierian honey should bedew,

My tenets briefly to expound to you ;

That by such means I haply might allure,

And thy attention to my verse secure ; 1160

Till of all things the Nature thou shouldst see,

And how that Nature's deck'd with rich variety.

Matter's pure particles, as late we shew'd,

Act on thro' ages solid, unsubdu'd ;

We'll now examine what their sum may be, 1165

Or whether they admit infinity ;

And as a Void, or space, or room we prove,

In which all things that are created move ;

Next let us ask : this WHOLE what limits bound,

Or if 'tis stretch'd into the Vast profound ? 1170

This WHOLE no farthest limits therefore knows,

Or having some Extreme we must suppose ;]

For an Extreme in no one thing is found,

Unless it lies beyond what else has bound ;

So as that utmost point we may descry, 1175

At which is lost our vision's faculty :

Nunc extra Summam quoniam nihil esse fatendum est,
Non habet Extremum : caret ergo fine, modoque :
Nec refert quibus adsistas regionibus ejus,
Usque adeo quem quisque locum possidit, in omneis 965
Tantundem parteis infinitum Omne relinquit.

Præterea, si jam finitum constituatur
Omne quod est spatium, si quis procurrat ad oras
Ultimus extremas, jaciatque volatile telum,
Id validis utrum contortum viribus ire 970
Quò fuerit missum mavis, longeque volare,
An prohibere aliquid censes, obstareque posse ?
Alterutrum fatearis enim, sumasque necesse est,
Quorum utrumque tibi effugium præcludit, et Omne
Cogit ut exempta concedas fine patere. 975
Nam five est aliquid, quod prohibeat, officiatque
Quò minus quò missum est veniat, finique locet se,
Sive foras fertur, non est ea finis profecto.
Hoc pacto sequar, atque oras ubicunque locâris
Extremas, quæram quid telo denique fiat. 980

Nought can beyond this Universe extend,
Which neither has Extreme, nor bound, nor end :
And on what spot of this great Whole we stand
Is of small import ; for whatever land 1180
Supports us, still there will be always found
One circling vast expanse, which knows no bound.
But let us give some boundaries to space ;
And on its utmost verge an archer place,
Who shoots the flying shaft : Which dost believe ; 1185
That, with the pow'rful impulse he should give,
E'en farther than the mark 'twould speed its way ;
Or that a something would resist and stay ?
Evasion here avails not ; for 'tis true,
This consequence, or that, must needs ensue. 1190
Learn then, instructed by example strong,
That to the All no limits can belong ;
For, whether ought there be which checks its force
Short of the mark, and terminates its course ;
Or whether onward still the shaft should tend ; 1195
Yet can we ascertain no certain end.
Following the fact : What bounds you may desire,
Mark out : Then, where 's the shaft ? I would inquire.

Fiet uti nusquam possit consistere finis :

Effugiumque fugæ prolatet copia semper.

Præterea spatium Summæ totius omne

Undique si inclusum certis consisteret oris,

Finitumque foret, jam copia Materiai

985

Undique ponderibus solidis conflûxet ad Imum ;

Nec res ulla geri sub cœli tegmine posset :

Nec foret omnino Cœlum, neque lumina Solis :

Quippe ubi materies omnis cumulata jaceret

Ex infinito jam tempore subsidendo.

990

At nunc nimirum requies data Principiorum

Corporibus nulla est : quia nil est funditus Imum,

Quò quasi confluere, et sedes ubi ponere possint ;

Semper et adsiduo motu res quæque geruntur

Partibus in cunctis, æternaque suppeditantur

995

Ex Infinito cita corpora Materiai.

Postremò ante oculos rem res finire videtur,

Aër dissepit Colleis, atque Aëra Monteis ;

Terra Mare, et contra Mare Terras terminat omneis.

'Tis where it proves that no fixt bounds can be,
For space to the shaft's flight is ever free. 1200

Were this great All's extended space suppos'd
Finite, and by giv'n boundaries inclos'd ;
Long since had Matter's mass, however great,
Sunk to the lowest Depth by solid weight ;
Nothing beneath heav'n's roof could have had birth, 1205
No Sky had chear'd, no Sun illum'd our earth ;
For Matter, which had then for ages been,
Would one vast heap by subsidence have lain :
But now first Principles are thought to keep
For ever moving, and admit no sleep ; 1210
No lowest Depth by us is now confest,
To which they may descend and sink to rest :
All things act of themselves, and ceaseless roll
Through ev'ry part of this capacious Whole ;
Which Whole capacious constantly supplies 1215
Seeds form'd of active Matter that ne'er dies.

Confines of other things some things appear ;
Air shuts out Hills, and Hills exclude the Air ;
Earth to the Sea gives limits, and again
Earth on all sides is border'd by the Main : 1220

OMNE quidem verò nihil est quod finiat extra : 1000

Est igitur natura loci, spatiumque profundi,

Quod neque clara suo percurrere flumina cursu

Perpetuo possint ævi labentia tractu :

Nec prorsum facere, ut restet minus ire, meando :

Usque adeo passim patet ingens copia rebus, 1005

Finibus exemptis in cunctas undique parteis.

Ipse modum porro sibi rerum Summa parare

Ne possit, Natura tenet : quia Corpus Inani,

Et quod Inane autem est, finiri Corpore cogit :

Ut sic alternis Infinita omnia reddat. 1010

Aut etiam, alterutrum nisi terminet alterum eorum,

Simplice natura pateat tamen Immoderatum :

Nec Mare, nec Tellus, neque Cœli lucida templa,

Nec Mortale genus, nec Divûm corpora sancta

Exiguum possent horâi sistere tempus. 1015

Nam dispulsa suo de cœtu Materiai

Copia ferretur magnum per Inane soluta,

Beyond this ample ALL we know no bound ;
For such is space, such is the vast profound,
That did proud rivers of the mightiest force
In the long lapse of time pursue their course ;
Throughout the realm of space they ne'er would go,
Or shorten of their way as fast they flow : 1226
Room so immense for all things open lies,
Which in no part admits of boundaries.

Nature provided in her great design,
That nothing should this Whole of things confine :
Save Void and Body are no limits found ; 1231
Void bounds what 's Body, Body is Void's bound ;
And to infinitude is stretch'd this All,
By termination thus reciprocal ;
Did one not limit t' other, there would be 1235
Of the same nature an Immensity :

Nor Earth's firm regions, nor the billowy Seas,
Nor Heav'n's proud roofs with ceaseless fires that blaze,
Nor Mortals, nor the sacred Pow'rs above,
Could one short moment of existence prove : 1240
For Matter's pure parts, from each other torn,
Thro' the vast Void would be dissolv'd and borne ;

Sive adeo potiùs nunquam concreta creâffet

Ullam rem, quoniam cogi disjecta nequisset.

Nam certè neque consilio Primordia rerum 1020

Ordine se, sua quæque sagaci mente locârunt;

Nec quos quæque darent motus pepigêre profecto:

Sed quia multimodis, multis, mutata, per Omne

Ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,

Omne genus motus, et cœtus experiundo, 1025

Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,

Qualibus hæc rebus consistit Summa creata:

Et multos etiam magnos servata per annos,

Ut semel in motus conjecta est convenienteis,

Efficit, ut largis avidum Mare fluminis undis 1030

Integrent Amnes, et Solis Terra vapore

Fota novet fœtus, summissaque gens animantum

Floreat, et vivant labentes Aëtheris ignes.

Quod nullo facerent pacto, nisi Materiai

Ex Infinito suboriri copia posset, 1035

Or nothing they had form'd, because ne'er join'd ;
For, loos'd, they could not be again combin'd.

The Principles of things by mental sense 1245

Rang'd not themselves, nor by a providence ;

Neither among themselves do they agree

How all their movements shall determin'd be :

But their vast numbers, often changing place,

And often struck, traverse this All of space ; 1250

Till, having many a combination prov'd,

In many a new direction having mov'd ;

They by such means acquire positions due,

To fashion things which in this Whole we view :

Then, being once into fit motions thrown, 1255

And for successive ages acting on ;

They cause great Rivers, in their devious way

Collecting streams, to swell the greedy Sea ;

Hence too Earth, foster'd by the Solar beams,

With fruits in renovated plenty teems ; 1260

Fresh creatures of each race spring up to fight,

And all Heav'n's fading lamps renew their light :

Which could not be ; unless that we suppose

Abundant Matter from the Vast arose,

Unde amissa solent reparari in tempore quoque.

Nam veluti privata cibo Natura animantum
Diffluit amittens corpus, sic omnia debent
Dissolvi, simul ac defecit suppeditare
Materies recta regione averfa viai.

1040

Nec Plagæ possent extrinsecus undique Summam
Conservare omnem, quæcunque est conciliata.
Cudere enim crebrò possunt, partemque morari,
Dum veniant aliæ, ac suppleri Summa queatur.

Interdum resilire tamen coguntur, et unà

1045

Principiis rerum spatium, tempusque fugai
Largiri, ut possint à cœtu libera ferri.

Quare etiam atque etiam suboriri multa necesse est.

Et tamen ut Plagæ quoque possint suppetere ipsæ,

Infinita opus est vis undique Materiai.

1050

Thro' time preventing all things from decay 1265
By new supplies, as Matter wore away.

For as all animated Beings cease,
When once depriv'd of nurture, to increase ;
So all things must of course dissolve to nought,
When Matter acts no longer as it ought, 1270
When, turn'd aside from paths it should pursue,
It ceases to afford assistance due.

Think not that outward Blows, as some may teach,
Can place creation's All beyond harm's reach ;
For certain concrete parts that All compose, 1275
Which concrete parts are sensible of Blows ;
Each Blow some parts from action may detain,
While others act, and in their stead remain :
Compell'd by force, these parts sometimes retire,
Giving, as Principles of things require, 1280
Room and occasion for escape ; that then,
From contact loos'd, they might be free again :
'Tis fitting therefore many seeds should rise,
Many and many, to afford supplies ;
And that, if Matter must maintain this fight, 1285
The mass of Matter should be infinite.

Illud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi,
In medium Summæ, quod dicunt, omnia niti,
Atque ideo Mundi naturam stare sine ullis
Ictibus externis, neque quoquam posse resolvi
Summa atque Ima, quod in Medium sint omnia nixa,
Ipsum si quidquam posse in se sistere credis : 1056
Et quæ pondera sunt sub terris omnia sursum
Nitier, in Terraque retrò requiescere pōsta :
Ut per aquas quæ nunc rerum simulacra videmus :
Et simili ratione Animalia suppa vagari 1060
Contendunt, neque posse è terris in loca cœli
Recidere inferiora magis, quam corpora nostra
Sponte sua possint in cœli templa volare :
Illi quom videant solem, nos sidera noctis
Cernere, et alternis nobiscum tempora cœli 1065
Dividere, et nocteis parileis agitare, diesque.

In these researches, Memmius, o beware,
Lest thou yield credence to what some declare !
Namely, that all things, as throughout they roll,
Tend to the centre of this boundless Whole ; 1290
And the World's nature therefore, they suppose,
Might be maintain'd without external blows :
Scatter'd nor parts Below, nor parts Above
Could be ; for both would to the Centre move.
Yet think'st thou bodies on themselves could rest ; 1295
Or pond'rous things below be upward prest,
And on the surface of this Earth remain
Revers'd, as objects are in water seen ?
Further, they would persuade with idle talk,
That on this earth Creatures beneath us walk, 1300
Who from their terrene stations ne'er can go
Downward, amid the tracts of air below ;
More than our bodies, as we will, can rise
Up to the glitt'ring mansions of the skies ;
When we behold the golden orb of light, 1305
The twinkling starry hosts rejoice their sight ;
With us heav'n's season they in turn enjoy,
And a like day and a like night employ.

Sed vanus stolidis hæc omnia finxerit error,
Amplexi quod habent perverse prima viai.
Nam Medium nihil esse potest, ubi Inane, locusque
Infinita: neque omnino, si jam Medium sit, 1070
Possit ubi quidquam hac potius consistere causa,
Quam quavis alia longè regione manere.
Omnis enim locus, ac spatium, quod Inane vocamus,
Per Medium, per non Medium concedat oportet
Æquis ponderibus, motus quacunque feruntur. 1075
Nec quisquam locus est, quo Corpora quom venêre,
Ponderis amissa vi possint stare in Inani:
Nec quod Inane autem 'st, ulli subsistere debet,
Quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat.
Haud igitur possunt tali ratione teneri 1080
Res in concilio, Medii cuppedine victæ:
Præterea quoque jam non omnia corpora fingunt
In Medium niti, sed Terrarum, atque Liquorum,
Humorem ponti, magnisque è montibus Undas,

Vain error to th' unwise these doctrines taught,
Who touching principles have wrongly thought ; 1310
For where is infinite the Void or space,
We surely cannot find a Central place :
And with the Medium did we e'en comply,
It would not furnish valid reason why
Things should in pref'rence to that Medium tend, 1315
Than to more distant parts their courses bend :
All room, all space, or Void, if right we say,
To pond'rous bodies ever must give way,
Where'er impell'd by movements they have got,
Whether they pass a Centre, whether not ; 1320
For to no certain spot can Bodies fly,
Where, fixt in Void, they lose weight's property ;
Nor can the Void support them, for it will
Yield, as by nature it is yielding still :
By no such means then are things held combin'd ; 1325
'Tis by no tendency of Central kind.
Further, not all of bodies, they allow,
Towards the Centre are dispos'd to go ;
But only such as various Soils compose,
And Waters, and the briny Seas ; with those 1330

Et quasi Terreno quæ corpore contineantur : 1085

At contrà tenueis exponunt Aëris auras,

Et calidos simul à Medio diferrier Igneis,

Atque ideo totum circumtremere Æthera signis,

Et Solis flammam per cœli cærule pasci,

Quod calor à Medio fugiens ibi conligat igneis. 1090

Quippe etiam vesci è Terra mortalia sæcla :

Nec prorsum arboribus summos frundescere ramos

Posse, nisi à Terris paullatim cuique cibatum

Terra det : at suprà circum tegere Omnia Cœlum ;

Ne, volucris ritu flammarum, mœnia Mundi 1095

Diffugiant subito magnum per Inane soluta,

Et ne cætera confimili ratione sequantur :

Neve ruant Cœli tonitralia templa supernè,

Terraque se pedibus raptim subducat, et omneis

That Torrents from the mighty mountains make ;
With such as of Earth's quality partake :
Whereas, they say, thin Breezes of the sky,
And burning Fires will from the Centre fly ;
Hence shine those Lamps of constellated light 1335
In ether hung, irradiating the night ;
Hence the Sun's beams in fields of airy blue
Imbibe fresh vigour, and their blaze renew ;
For in collected flames all heat is driv'n,
Escaping from its Centre, up to heav'n. 1340
'Tis from the Earth the living tribes are fed ;
Nor would the trees with leafy green o'erspread
Lift their proud tops, unless the earth had lent
To each a constant kindly nourishment.
But round this All, protecting it, 'tis said, 1345
A vast celestial Canopy is spread ;
Lest, as rapacious fires bear all away,
The World's huge walls should suddenly decay,
Dispart, dissolve, in the great Void be lost,
And all of things be in the ruin tost ; 1350
Lest too the thund'ring Roofs should from above
Fall down, and Earth beneath our feet remove ;

Inter permixtas terræ, cœlique ruinas 1000

Corpora solventes, abeant per Inane profundum,

Temporis ut puncto nihil exstet reliquiarum,

Desertum præter Spatium, et Primordia cæca.

Nam quacunque prius de parti corpora cêsse

Constitues, hæc rebus erit pars janua lethi: 1105

Hac se turba foras dabit omnis Materiai.

Hæc si pernosces parva perfunctus opella,

(Namque alid ex alio clarescet,) non tibi cæca

Nox iter eripiet, quin ultima Naturai

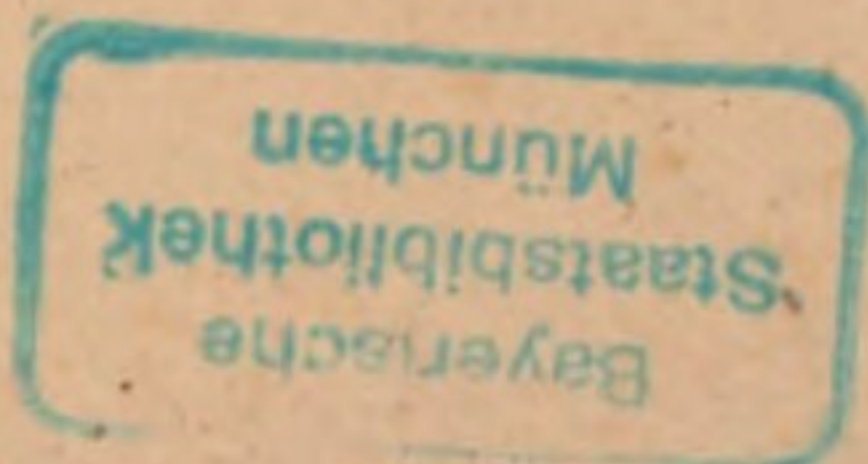
Pervideas ; ita res accendent lumina rebus. 1110

FINIS LIBRI PRIMI.

Left, with the land and sky's commingled heap,
Our bodies melt amid the Vacant deep ;
Till in one instant nothing left would be 1355
But Space, and Atoms which none e'er could see :
For, in whatever spot you should conceive
Prime bodies first can burst apart ; believe,
That breach to them will prove destruction's gate,
Whence Matter's mass shall rush forth to its fate. 1360
Shouldst thou these doctrines clearly comprehend,
(And no vast toil is needed for such end,)
Since on this subject that will light display,
Nothing of darkness can obstruct thy way ;
But Nature's inmost depths thou shalt discern, 1365
For all things must elucidate all things in turn.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

K



Left, with the land and sky's commingled heap,

Our bodies rest amid the Vacant deep ;

Till in one instant nothing left would be

But Space; and Atoms which none e'er could see ;

For in whatever spot you should conceive

Some bodies still can burst apart ; believe,

That proofs to them will prove destruction's state.

Whence Matter's mass shall turn to its last state.

Should you these notions already comprehend,

(And no vast toil is need'd for such end.)

Know on this subject that will right display

Nothing of chance, all is determin'd by way.

For Matter's small degree from then depends

For all things, and whatever all things depend

ERRATUM.

Page 37, Line 347, of the English Translation,

For WINDS' read WIND's.

MUTATION

Page 37, line 24, of the original manuscript
is "W. 1000" and "W. 1000"

ERRATUM

Page 17, line 24, of the English translation
The words "and IV" should be

Lucretius Carus, Titus,

The first book of Titus Lucretius Carus on the nature of things

London 1799

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